

DUDLEY CHRONICLE



Thursday, December 13, 2012

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Big reunion

Former pupils reunited to remember school days

Page 8



Festive fun

TV highlights and puzzles for all the family to enjoy

Inside



Mighty run

Player's marathon sprint brings rewards for DK

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Ice cream seller sent to jail over 'turf war'

AN ice cream van erupted in Dudley when a seller attacked a rival's van for cashing in on "his turf".

Steffan Debbattista is now behind bars for his angry outburst against rival Maxine Catalano. He tailgated her for eight miles after spotting her van on his patch.

She managed to get away from him but when her van ended up behind his at traffic lights in Birmingham Road, he deliberately reversed into her.

Prosecutor Miss Marisha Parathalingham told Wolverhampton Crown Court last week that Debbattista sped off after the crash.

The 20-year-old was later traced because a witness made a note of the registration.

Debbattista struck again 11 days later on September 15 last year while on bail for the first offence. This time he snapped off the handle of the machine in Miss Catalano's van, flooding it with ice cream, the court heard.

Debbattista, from Boundary Hill, Lower Gornal, had denied both charges but pleaded guilty to criminal damage. Mr William Rickarby, defending, said: "He suffers from a hyperactive disorder and this episode has taught him a salutary lesson." Debbattista was jailed for five months for dangerous driving and one month for criminal damage, to run concurrently, as well as being banned from driving for two years.

• **Terror – page 4**

Jumpers on for charity

SHOPPERS are being invited to put on their best novelty Christmas jumpers and head over to the outdoor ice rink at Dudley's Merry Hill Centre on December 14.

The centre will host its first Christmas jumper skate off for Save the Children.

The charity has created National Christmas Jumper Day. Between 10 and 11am that day, Merry Hill is asking shoppers and store staff to show their support. The aim will be to get as many people in their Christmas jumpers on the ice.

BOOST IN BATTLE FOR HIPPODROME

by Andrew Turton

CAMPAIGNERS fighting to save Dudley Hippodrome have been given a fresh boost after leading councillors visited the venue and said they hoped it could be preserved.

The Friends of Dudley Hippodrome issued an open invitation to the borough council to tour the building to see the potential for themselves. The art deco-styled 1,752-seater auditorium in Castle Hill hosted entertainment greats like Bob Hope, Laurel and Hardy and Tommy Cooper.

It was closed in 2009 after operating as a bingo hall. But the former theatre is facing the bulldozers because Dudley Council wants to tear it down as part of wider plans to regenerate the Castle Hill area.

The Friends group gave 10 councillors a tour of the building and discussed their bid to reopen it as a community theatre.

Councillor Gaye Partridge was among those who attended.

"It was very impressed with what I saw. It is a lovely building. You can see where the campaigners are coming from," she said.

"When you start talking to the campaigners about it, it is very difficult not to get inspired by it. I'm hoping to read the business plan as well. I wish them well with their endeavours."

Councillor Hillary Bills also said: "I was encouraged by what people had been saying, but it has got a lot of issues that need addressing.

Important

"If the project could get off the ground it would be wonderful. The business plan is important to show how it could work but I wish them well."

The Friends of Dudley Hippodrome has submitted the latest version of a business plan to reopen and run the theatre as a community arts venue to Dudley Council.

They hope to host touring productions and regional theatre groups.

Plans also look at other ways to raise revenue including renovating the basement of the theatre into a five music venue.

They also hope to open a museum in the building detailing its history.

Campaign leader Geoff Fitzpatrick said he was delighted the councillors had been inside to look at the building and talk to group members.

"It has been absolutely great as we wanted people to not think of it as a bingo hall as it once was but as Dudley Hippodrome and consider our plans."

Feelings are mixed over centre plans

MULTI-million pound plans for a new supermarket in the centre of Dudley received a mixed response from councillors who decided to delay making a decision on the scheme.

The council's planning committee will now visit the development site in Trindle Road next month before deciding whether to approve the proposals.

Members were this week shown artist impressions giving a glimpse of how the supermarket, which would bring 300 full-time and part-time jobs, could look.

While they all welcomed plans to demolish the "eyesore" office block Cavendish House, some were divided in their views on the project. Councillor Stuart Turner agreed with the scheme "in principle" and the loss of the Cavendish House, which he said had been a blot on Dudley's skyline for far too long.

But he told Monday's meeting, he was concerned the development would not encourage people into the town centre because of people having to cross the busy Trindle Road.

His concerns were echoed by Councillor Qadar Zada who said he believed the development would be "segregated from the town centre." But Councillor Tim Wright welcomed the chance to transform the rundown site.

• **Vision – page 5**

Leafing their mark on trees



Harley Washington-Downing, Jack Farrington, Sam Cooper and Hollie Pritchard, all nine YOUNGSTERS at a Dudley school have Dress A Tree Day. The event encourages been busy decorating a tree with a Victorian people to celebrate trees. Decorations style. Year 4 pupils at Dudley Wood Primary School were taking part in national included candy canes and small hand-made chimney sweeps.

THE grieving family of a Kingswinford woman who died in a crash near Kidderminster have paid tribute to their angel.

Samantha Jennings, known as Sam, died at the on the A449 at Cookley, near Kidderminster, early on Saturday.

The 26-year-old mother of two was a former pupil of the Glymne Primary School and Summerhill School.

She had two boys and worked as a care assistant, looking after adults with disabilities.

Her family said: "Sam was a caring person, an angel. She was a much-loved mother, daughter, sister, and granddaughter, and we are broken-hearted.

"Sam was vivacious, a party girl who lived life to the full. She had the world at her feet, and was so happy. She leaves us the legacy of her two little boys and she will be forever in our thoughts and in our hearts."

She was a front seat passenger in a black Vauxhall Astra which left the road and hit a tree, near the Island Pool pub, around 1.30am.

A 22-year-old man was taken to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham with two broken legs and a broken pelvis. A rear seat passenger, a 24-year-old man, suffered minor injuries.

Witnesses can call 0300 333 3000.

Mystery of Green Man

The Green Man may be the stuff of folklore but now a bronze plaque of him is at the centre of a mystery after vanishing from Dudley town centre.

Dudley Council leaders are appealing for help to track down the plaque, depicting the medieval symbol of spring fertility, which used to welcome shoppers using the Green Man Entry in Castle Street.

The artwork was commissioned for around £3,000 as part of a public art project 17 years ago.

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NEWS

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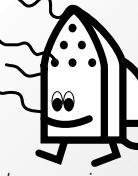
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Prolific burglars are sent to prison

TWO prolific burglars who raided 12 homes and stole four vehicles between them during a month-long crime spree have been jailed for more than three years.

Stuart Salt and Robert Smith burgled properties across the Dudley borough, taking more than £10,000 in TVs, computers and other electrical items. Smith stole a £15,000 Hyundai car from a petrol forecourt in Asda, Brierley Hill while the

owner was buying fuel. Wolverhampton Crown Court heard the pair, who both have children, used the same white van at most of the burglaries and even backed it on to the drive of one property in Coppice Road, Coseley.

Salt, of Overbrook Close, Gornal Wood, and Smith, of Bilston Road, Monmore Green, Wolverhampton, were both originally arrested over the raid in Coppice Road and

another in Havacre Lane, Coseley. But Mr Warren Stanier, prosecuting, told Wolverhampton Crown Court they then admitted a catalogue of other offences between September 18 and October 15.

They broke into four properties on October 15 alone.

In total the pair admitted burgling six homes together, and attempting to burgle three, while Smith also admitted a further bur-

glary and attempted burglary, as well as three thefts of motor vehicles. Salt, 31, was jailed for 40 months, with four months for a separate charge of handling a stolen mobile phone, while 29-year-old Smith got 44 months. Salt was also given six points on his licence for driving without insurance.

Judge Nicholas Webb told them: "You both went on something of a spree."

Merry Hill banned toll is now at 28 and rising

THE tally of troublemakers banned from the Merry Hill shopping centre in the run-up to Christmas has risen to 28. And more are set to be stopped in their tracks as police use mobile fingerprinting devices and head-mounted cameras.

Safari park gets ready to take on 250 workers

AROUND 250 seasonal jobs are up for grabs at West Midland Safari Park in Bewdley.

Positions available include catering and retail assistants, games supervisors and amusement ride operators.

New recruits are also needed to work on the animal reserves and in the admissions department.

Hundreds of hopefuls are expected to apply for the highly sought-after posts when the attraction's recruitment website launches on December 18.

A further 150 jobs will become available between April and July to boost staff numbers for the holiday season.

Both full and part-time staff are needed to help cover peak periods at the park.

Human resources manager Michelle Gale said: "We have been working on an upgraded staff induction and training package for the past three months.

"This has now been completed and our departments are very pleased with the results. We are sure that all new starters will benefit from enhanced training and gain invaluable work experience."

A clampdown on suspected shoplifters and anti-social behaviour was launched by police and security staff at the Dudley retail complex on November 1. It is part of a wider Black Country clampdown aimed at wrecking criminals' attempts to cash in on Christmas.

West Midlands Police officers are increasing their presence in busy shopping centres and towns throughout the region to try to make sure Christmas shoppers have an enjoyable, safe and trouble-free time.

But at Merry Hill they are going a step further, using hi-tech devices to identify and catch the crooks.

Anybody committing a crime can be excluded from the centre immediately for periods of between three months and two years.

Festive

The initiative, to combat the usual festive increase in retail crime, was set up by police and Dudley's Business Crime Partnership.

Shoplifting, thefts from shoppers, cheque or card fraud, assault against business staff, alcohol-related violence and anti-social behaviour are among the crimes targeted.

Police and security staff patrolling the Merry Hill Centre are using head-cams to deter offenders and video evidence.

They are using a mobile ID system - consisting of a Blackberry Smart phone linked to a fingerprint reading device - so they can quickly check someone they have stopped is who they say they are.

Choirs celebrate Christmas



Ellie Kovacs, aged 7, front with others from Jesson's Church of England Primary School Jubilate Choir and some of The Gentlemen Songsters Male Voice Choir

A PRIMARY school choir and a male voice will celebrate Christmas together.

Jesson's Church of England Primary School's Jubilate Choir, Dudley, will join The Gentlemen's Songsters for the Dudley Town Hall concert this Saturday, December 15. Musical director David Jackson said: "We sing pop music as well as hymns and religious music. At Saturday's concert we'll be singing a range, including a nice adaptation we have

of Sweet Child O' Mine." The Jubilate choir has about 30 members, aged between seven and 11, and is one of three choirs at the school, which specialises in the performing arts. Mr Jackson said: "We find music and performing arts help the children learn." The concert starts at 7.30pm. The school's three choirs will also be presenting a concert called That's What I Call Christmas on December 20 at 7pm at the town hall.

Cheesey link never o-curd to burglar

A BURGLAR who stole £2,000 of computer equipment from a college for students with learning disabilities was brought to justice - after being caught with a lump of cheese stolen from the canteen fridge, a court heard.

Shane Smith burgled Stourbridge College's horticultural and catering centre in Leasowes Lane, Halesowen. He was linked to the raid on April 16 through fingerprints. Wolverhampton Crown Court was told.

When police searched his house two weeks after the break-in they found the cheese in his fridge and realised it was from the college.

The 23-year-old, of Hadens Road, Cradley Heath, was handed a six-month prison sentence suspended for two years.

Miss Rhiannon Jones, prosecuting, said Smith originally claimed he had only taken the lump of cheese.

The court was told he was accompanied by two other men, who have not been identified. Smith, who admitted burglary, was also ordered to pay £1,000 compensation, and complete an alcohol treatment programme.

Call to help jungle trek

THE Mayor of Dudley wants people to help boost his charities as one of his staff is to battle through 150 miles of South American jungle for good causes.

Dudley Council's mayoral attendant Mike Crannage is planning a 150 mile coast to coast race through the jungles of Costa Rica in February next year.

The 53-year-old will walk, run, climb, abseil and swim the equivalent of six marathons and complete the distance, from the pacific coast to the Caribbean Sea, in 10 days. Visit www.mike-crannage.com.

Christmas carols

DUDLEY Council has organised the annual civic carol service for December 20.

Dudley mayor Councillor Melvyn Mottram will host the service at Christ Church, Coseley, from 7.30pm.

Dudley Young Voices, VT and In Sound Company choirs will be helping raise the roof.

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Chamber hire gets approved

PLANS to hire out the council chamber at Wyre Forest District Council's new £10 million headquarters to raise cash have been approved.

A total of eight rooms are available for meetings and events, costing up to £120 a day. Five rooms including the chamber are suitable for cabaret, while three can be used for theatre.

A council report says the chamber, which can hold 60 people, would cost £20 an hour, £65 per half day or £120 a day. Other rooms range from £55 to £100 a day.

The new premises at Fine-point Business Park has proved controversial, with some councillors saying that the cash could have been better spent in other areas.

But the council says services under one roof will help save around £500,000 every year. The plans have now been approved by council leader John Campion.

The report by Wyre Forest's director of community assets and localism, Caroline Newlands, says: "To enable the building facilities to be used effectively and efficiently, it is proposed we offer the use of the meeting rooms in the public access part of the building."

£500,000 deal is won

A DUDLEY software company has won a contract in Australia worth more than £500,000 to help a carmaker look for new customers.

Chrysalis-Solimotive adapted its UK software programme to suit potential customers in Australia.

The move paid off when it penned a three-year contract with an international division of an automotive manufacturer's finance company worth \$40,000 Australian Dollars (£548,000).

Since then Chrysalis-Solimotive in Market Street, Stourbridge, has grown its operations.

Christmas fair to help church

A CHRISTMAS fair will be held to help repair and reopen a Dudley Church. The fair will be at the Quality Hotel from 6.30pm until 9.30pm on December 19.

Money will go toward restoration work at St John's Church, Kates Hill, Dudley. Admission is 50p for adults and free for children.

Homes bid on brickworks site is allowed

Plans for more than 100 new homes, a craft village and nursing home on the site of a historic former brickworks on the Dudley-South Staffordshire border can go ahead after the Government gave the green light.

David Wilson Homes and Weinberger have been granted outline planning permission for the development at Baggeridge Brickworks in Gospel End, Sedgley.

The developers had appealed to the Planning Inspectorate against South Staffordshire Council's decision to refuse their application earlier this year.

Councillors had argued that the development would be too large for the village but

developers say it would boost the area's economy and attract new visitors. A planning inquiry was held last month, and now the scheme, which includes 140 homes, 12 craft workshops, a 60-bedroom nursing home and new road access from the A463, has been approved after a planning inspector ruled it was an appropriate development. The decision signals the end of the site's long association with brickmaking which stretches back to the 1930s.

During the inquiry, the hearing was told that the plans go against the Black Country Core Strategy, which lays out guidelines for major building projects in the region.

But the applicants said there was a "clear need" for new houses and a nursing home in the area. Announcing his decision to allow the appeal, planning inspector John Papworth said the scheme would enable a previously developed site to be reused and would remove derelict buildings and land.

He said the project would include the retention of the brickworks chimney to retain "a visual reminder of the site's history". Mr Papworth said the scheme would bring many benefits such as affordable housing, care home beds and new employment benefits.

He added: "The proposal would not be

inappropriate development in the green belt, and redevelopment of the site would bring benefits to openness and the character and appearance of the area." But the chairman of South Staffordshire Council's regulatory committee Councillor Brian Cox said: "We're obviously disappointed that the inspector has concluded that the development would provide substantial benefits over the present situation. Gospel End is a small hamlet which would be more than doubled in size by these plans.

"We felt there was a lack of local services to sustain a development of this size - we feel it's just simply in the wrong location."

Permission to demolish the King Arthur pub is secured

THE owner of a Dudley pub, which is on a main route through the Black Country, has secured consent to demolish it, despite calls for it to be preserved.

Amrinder Singh can now knock down the King Arthur on the corner of Priory Road and Birmingham New Road. The demolition plans had sparked calls for the building, a 1930s roadside, to be preserved.

Mr Singh had informed Dudley Council of his plans, and under planning rules the authority had 28 days to object.

Ward councillor Alan Finch said he was disappointed the council had been "powerless" to stop the building from being knocked down.

It would have made a fine hotel, especially down the road from the Black Country Living Museum and Dudley Zoo.

Neighbour of the pub Alison Whitehouse, said: "It is very sad that yet another part of our local heritage is to disappear and there is nothing that we can do about it."

Deputy leader of Dudley Council Shaukat Ali said: "Legally the authority can only consider the way the building is demolished and the proposed restoration after the site has been cleared."

Driver in road rage attack

A MOTORIST was punched and kicked to the ground in a road rage attack during rush hour in Dudley.

The man was assaulted by the driver and passenger of a green Peugeot 206 at the junction of Flood Street Island on the Southern by-pass. The attack happened after the victim went to check if the Peugeot driver was not in distress.

The attacker had cut in front of the victim's vehicle and a lorry before approaching the junction. Anyone who witnessed the attack on November 6 should call police on 101.



Headteacher David Kemp, who is heading to Africa, with college pupils

Head is heading out to aid Africans

A HEADTEACHER who has transformed a Stourbridge school is bidding a fond farewell to his fellow staff and pupils and is preparing for an education project in Africa.

David Kemp took over the former Grange School 11 years ago and steered it through to becoming Pedmore Technology College and Community School in 2005.

Under his leadership, it has grown from a "satisfactory" Ofsted rating to being "a good school with outstanding features", while the number of pupils gaining at least five A* to C GCSE grades has grown by 40 per cent.

Mr Kemp, aged 59, a teacher for 30 years who lives in Kings Heath, Birmingham, said: "I'm going out on a high."

"And I'm not really retiring because, after a six month break, I intend to join an education development project somewhere in East Africa, although the location is yet to be decided."

Mr Kemp, a widower, started his teaching career in Sierra Leone, West Africa, and has also worked in the Gulf state of Oman.

NEWS

in brief

Nursery looking to expand diner

A NURSERY has applied to extend its restaurant so it can cater to a growing number of customers.

Rowberry's Nursery in Lower Chaddesley Corbett, Kidderminster has applied to extend its 336sqm site by 168sqm.

In his application, the owner Mr C Rowberry said: "The restaurant has proved very popular. We therefore require additional space in order to meet the demand from customers. The design is to match the existing building."

Plea on term for sex crime rejected

A PAEDOPHILE who was jailed for assaulting two young boys has lost an appeal against his minimum jail term.

Mark Colin Dixon, aged 28, of Blackacre Road, Dudley, was sentenced to imprisonment for public protection at Wolverhampton Crown Court in August for rape and attempted rape and ordered to serve a minimum of six years before applying for release, but he had challenged the length of term at the Court of Appeal.

Village path will get improvements

IMPROVEMENTS are to be carried out on a public footpath in the village of Belbroughton, near Stourbridge.

Belbroughton Parish Council has ordered the work on the path from the village's recreation ground to its school.

The work is likely to take place in the week beginning December 17.

Hotel would be a welcome boost

A £6 million plan for a Premier Inn hotel and restaurant on a main route into Stourbridge will bring a welcome boost to the town, a civic leader says.

Chairman of Stourbridge Township Council Margaret Scott described the scheme earmarked for land off Birmingham Street as a "great idea".

If planning permission is granted, 65 jobs would be created.

Christmas meal

BELBROUGHTON Horticultural Society will hold its Christmas supper at the church hall on December 14, starting at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £8. Call 01562 711118.

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NEWS

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



THANKS for the suggestion but William and Kate are not going to call the kid Josey Wales.

□□□□□□□

AND now a few words on the health benefits of being a lardarse: "If she (Kate) wasn't so damn skinny she'd have a bit of fat to cope with the weight loss and dehydration. She doesn't, hence the need to hospitalise her as her thinness increases her risk factor." (From Sky News website, where all opinions are equally valid).

□□□□□□□

REJOICE, for the law will be changed to prevent females being discriminated against in the succession to the British Crown. Whatever sex it happens to be, William and Kate's baby will one day be monarch, because it will be the oldest of their children. Is that fair? By automatically crowning the oldest kid, we are swapping one form of discrimination (sexism) for another (ageism). Why should the second or third child not be monarch? How dare the system deny them the top job just because, by an accident of history, they are younger? If my argument strikes you as nonsense today, bear in mind that the very idea of sexually-equal succession would have seemed treason, or even heresy, only 50 years ago. William and Kate's child is unlikely to take the throne for another half-century and you can bet your life that our views and values that seem so reasonable to us in 2012 will seem bonkers to our great-great grandchildren.

□□□□□□□

ACTUALLY, the best and most traditional way to choose the monarch is for the rival claimants to assemble about 20,000 terrified peasants each on a bit of open ground (Edgehill, Towton, etc) and command them to bash each other's brains out. Winner takes all.

□□□□□□□

A READER writes: "If journalists are instructed to support one political group over another, is that freedom of the Press or a form of journalistic dictatorship?"

Actually, it is freedom of the Press. It is the freedom of any editor or proprietor to support any political party they choose. The journalist is free to work for any newspaper he likes. The readers are free to buy newspapers that reflect their politics.

Many British newspapers, both national and regional, were born out of political activism and the desire to change the world. That is why we have such a rich and varied Press. Television broadcasters are bound by law to be politically balanced, and are overseen by Ofcom. Newspapers are free of such rules but we have plenty of enemies who would relish the Press being brought under Ofcom's control.

"Political balance" has a sweet, reasonable ring but it is the antithesis of a free Press. And if we went down that road, with every column inch analysed for political bias and balance, Britain would only need one newspaper. We could call it Truth or as they say in Russia, Pravda.

□□□□□□□

A SURVEY reveals that more than two-thirds of workers are embarrassed by their jobs and lie to make them sound more interesting. I had a pal who got a job putting up "for sale" signs for an estate agent. He called himself an information technologist.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

New screening helps to save lives

TWO men have lived to tell the tale after a new health screening programme found they had monster-sized bulges in their main arteries.

Chemical plant worker Roger Davies, from Woodsetton, Dudley, had a swelling measuring 10.5cm across – the largest of any abdominal aortic aneurysm detected so far in the screening initiative nationally, and Wolverhampton postal worker Tom Walker, whose aneurysm measured 7.5cm, said: "I was a ticking time bomb."

Both Mr Davies and Mr Walker have made good recoveries after lifesaving operations at Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital, which will, from April, also host all vascular surgery for patients from Walsall and Wolverhampton. Mr Davies and Mr Walker, both 64, are among 2,000 men from Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton who have taken up the offer of an ultrasound scan to see if they had an aneurysm. Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, which is hosting the abdominal

aortic aneurysm programme, began screening men aged 65 in June. About 5,000 men will be invited for screening in the first year.

Rajiv Pathak, consultant vascular surgeon and programme director, said: "For those with an aneurysm measuring 5.5cm or more, we will operate within eight weeks." Men over 65 can refer themselves for a scan on 01384 321125.

Further information is available at <http://aaa.screening.nhs.uk/>



Roger Davies

Criminals targeted in festive operation

Known crooks in the Dudley area will face a Christmas advent countdown of a different kind.

Officers from Dudley's Local Policing Unit have launched a series of warrants and other action against known offenders, running up to December 24.

Operation Advent is targeting people suspected of illegal activity, aiming to spoil criminals' intent to profit from the festive season, when there is traditionally an increase in burglaries, robberies and vehicle crime. Warrants could be issued under the Misuse of Drugs Act or might relate to offences such as handling stolen goods.

And the campaign will also include "drink drive lock downs", with officers taking a "no-tolerance" approach to people tempted to get behind the wheel after Christmas parties.

Insp Richard Jones, who is leading the initiative, said: "December is always a busy month for police as traditionally we see the number of burglaries and similar crimes increase with the darker nights and the knowledge that people have presents stored in the run up to Christmas."

Crafts over Christmas

PEOPLE can get crafty for Christmas at Stourbridge's Red House Glass Cone and Broadfield House Glass Museum.

Adults can make their own glass decorations at the Cone. Equipment and guidance is provided 10.30am-12.30pm or 1.30pm-3.30pm this Saturday and on Saturday 15 December at a cost of £21 per person.

Pre-booking and payment in advance is needed on 01384 815571. At Broadfield House there is an adults Christmas crafts session on Friday 21 December 10.15am-1pm.

Help with abuse

DUDLEY People can get help and advice on dealing with domestic abuse at Christmas.

Safe & Sound, Dudley's community safety partnership is running its 12 Safer Days of Christmas campaign to give residents 12 safety tips. Domestic abuse can be reported on 0121 626 8078.



Ice cream seller Maxine Catalano and niece Chloe Smith, who were terrorised

was selling ice cream on the corner of Tudor Road and Glen Road, Upper Gornal, when he arrived in his red Vauxhall Astravan, told her should not be serving at that time and he wanted the phone number of her boss.

Grabbed

But, when she refused, he leaned forward and grabbed the lever of the ice cream dispensing machine, breaking it off and causing £600 damage.

Miss Catalano said she only sold ice cream occasionally during this summer because she was frightened after her ordeal – but now he was behind bars she would be back on her rounds. Meanwhile Debattista's mother, 44-year-old Michelle Debattista, and his 17-year-old girlfriend Tammy Jones are distraught. Mrs Debattista claimed Miss Catalano had "wound him up". "The sentence is so unfair and harsh – nobody was hurt and I don't believe he did what was claimed in court."

ICE cream turf war victim Maxine Catalano has told of her terror after rival seller Steffan Debattista went into meltdown because he kept spotting her van on territory he claimed as his own.

The 20-year-old Maltese-born Dudley man chased her and her teenage niece for about eight miles and then deliberately reversed into her red-fronted vehicle.

After being jailed Debattista's red Steff's Ices van is parked up on the driveway of his home in Boundary Hill, Lower Gornal, for the foreseeable future.

As relatives and neighbours of Debattista painted a much sweeter picture of their local ice cream man, even saying they were launching a petition to free him, grandmother Miss Catalano described him as "arrogant" with a bad temper.

Miss Catalano, said: "There aren't any laid down areas where you can sell."

"And I've never had any problem with any other ice cream seller. We all normally agree amicably about where we stop to sell and at what times.

"I never gave Steff any grief but he was arrogant and I think he had a problem with me because I was a woman. His anger was terrifying." Miss Catalano, a 49-year-old mother of three who lives in the Oldbury area, sold ice cream for Ronnie O'Sullivan's uncle, Antonio Catalano, the father of her 17-year-old son Giuseppe, from 1993 until 2004.

Then, during last year, she took a job driving for Steve's Super Whips of Cox's Lane, Cradley Heath.

It was on September 4, as she drove along Dibdale Road, Gornal, at about 1.40pm she saw Debattista behind her.

Traffic

She said: "He was trying to cut in front of me and to ram me and I went towards the Priory ruins in The Broadway.

"When we passed the Fellows Club, next to Dudley Zoo, he was still with us and, when we stopped at the traffic lights outside the old JB's nightclub he parked adjacent."

She said he leaned out of his window and threatened to smash her van. Miss Catalano told how she continued to drive around the area near Burnt Tree and Tividale to try to dodge him, with the police emergency services on her intercom in the van as she reported the drama.

But then, near the new Tesco at Burnt Tree, she realised he had driven out from a slip road and was directly in front.

"I saw Steff suddenly start reversing his van directly at me and he kept accelerating then stopping in front," she said.

"I pulled up behind his van, which was now stopped at the lights outside the Floors to Go shop. I saw him suddenly start reversing his van directly at me and he collided, causing about £1,500 damage to the front of my van."

Miss Catalano says both she and her 13-year-old niece who was with her in the van received back and neck injuries. But it didn't end there. While Debattista was on bail for damaging her vehicle, on September 15 2011 she

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Scheme for reopening railway line

REGIONAL transport bosses confirmed talks have been held with a firm looking to reopen an existing rail freight line for passenger services through Dudley.

But they say the plans are just one option.

Others include extending the Midland Metro to Dudley and Brierley Hill.

Parry People Movers, Cradley Heath, had already drawn up initial £5 million proposals to open a tram-train service on a line from Stourbridge to Brierley Hill.

They outlined plans to use the freight line from Stourbridge Junction to the former Round Oak station, Brierley Hill, with three metro-style stations.

Bosses at West Midlands Transport Authority Centro say they have held talks with the engineering firm and are considering it against other options on the table.

Centro spokesman Peter Cameron said: "We have received a proposal about the possibility of running a passenger service, using Parry People Mover technology."

While we acknowledge that additional passenger services in this area could benefit residents, we are still looking at all the options available."

Town hall lights plan

STOURBRIDGE Town Hall could be lit up at night as part of a wider scheme to revamp the town centre.

The old Crown Centre is being replaced by a Tesco supermarket and shopping complex.

The scheme includes proposals to revamp the square at the bottom of the High Street to make it more attractive to shoppers.

The side of the town hall will form part of the square along with the entrance to the new shopping centre.

Tesco has now submitted an application for listed building consent to install feature lighting on the town hall.

Spokesman Jonathan Simpson said: "The redevelopment of the Crown Centre is a major investment in Stourbridge and we are delighted we will be improving the local environment."

Quiz night date

HAGLEY Wives and Women's Fellowship will hold a quiz night on January 8, at 8pm in St Saviour's Church, Hagley.

Police hunt knife robber who terrorised staff



Police are appealing for help to trace this man, filmed robbing a Brierley Hill store.

Police are hunting an armed robber who used a knife to terrorise a woman assistant at a Brierley Hill store before fleeing with the takings.

Detectives have released a CCTV image of a man they want to speak to in connection with the robbery.

He is wearing a distinctive tracksuit top, and police hope it may jog the memories of witnesses – or even prompt friends or family to contact them.

The raid happened at around 9pm on November 17 at the One-Stop shop in Turners Lane, Withymoor.

The man went into the shop armed with a

knife and threatened staff. A terrified assistant, aged 27, handed over the takings and was left badly shaken by her ordeal.

DC Ryan Matthews, from West Midlands CID, said: "We've worked really hard to reduce robberies in the area and that's why we're keen to identify the lad in the CCTV so that we can prevent him from committing further crimes.

"I am keen to hear from anyone who recalls seeing the lad hanging around the area before the robbery or running off after, he added. "Of course, it goes without saying that if the lad is your son or a relative, you really must contact us before he ends up in

even more trouble." News of the appeal for witnesses comes as detectives say robbery in the Dudley borough has been driven down by 30.4 per cent.

Between April 2012 and November, there were 203 raids throughout the entire borough.

This compared with 292 offences in the same period in 2011.

Anyone who can identify the man caught on camera should call DC Matthews on 101.

Alternatively people who do not want to speak with police officers directly can contact the independent charity Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

NEWS in brief

Council scheme hits the £1m mark

A COUNCIL scheme has received more than £1 million of card and cash payments in a single month for the first time.

Bosses say the milestone, which was reached in October by Dudley Council Plus, demonstrates the centre on Castle Street, continues to be popular with residents as a place to visit and pay their council bills.

The news comes just a month after Callpay, the council's round-the-clock 24/7 automated telephone payment system, reached the £50 million mark.

Police officer gets lifesaving award

A POLICEMAN who twice revived a cyclist from Stourbridge after a crash has received a top lifesaving award. PC Steve Mason brought Mark Ashton back to life after the cyclist was hit by a van.

It happened in Churchill, Worcestershire in March when Mr Ashton, of Ridge Street, Woolsaton, suffered multiple injuries. PC Mason received the Royal Humane Society Resuscitation Certificate.

Students help to build new school

STUDENTS at Stourbridge's Ridgewood High School have been busy raising money towards building a new school in a poor village in The Gambia.

The Student Voice charity Taskforce organised the week, which included play your cards right, hook a duck, raffles and cake sales, as well as a netball match against teachers.

RNLI collections at store gain £840

THE Royal National Lifeboat Institution raised £840 after two days collecting outside an Asda store.

Brierley Hill and Kingswinford branch of the charity collected outside the Pearson Street store, Brierley Hill.

A spokesman said while they collected, lifeboats launched from Jersey, Sunderland, Porthcawl and 14 other stations.

Dudes at hall

AN evening of music, comedy and Christmas cheer with "The Opera Dudes" will be held at Clent Parish Hall, near Stourbridge, on December 22 at 7.30pm.

Vision of new supermarket to spark a revival of centre

ARTISTS impressions have been unveiled of a new supermarket in the heart of Dudley town centre that could bring hundreds of jobs. With striking floor-to-ceiling glass walls and curved architecture, the development would transform an outdated office block in the town.

Cavendish Quarter Properties Ltd wants to build the supermarket and petrol station where Cavendish House stands in Trindle Road. Residents have been calling for the unsightly building to be knocked down for some time. The images show how the office block would be replaced with a modern supermarket.

They have backed the scheme saying it will bring employment to the town and revamp a partially derelict site, which has been earmarked for regeneration.

Under the plans, Cavendish House will be knocked down and the site, as well as neighbouring land, will be cleared to make way for the store and petrol station.

A total of 402 parking spaces would be created partly underneath the store and on two decked levels.

It would be operated as a free car park, limited to a two hour maximum stay but it's not yet known which store chain would move on to the site.

In a report planning officers said: "On balance even though there are acknowledge potential impacts on some existing food stores within Dudley and the catchment area the proposed development will lead to the positive improvement of an existing, partly derelict Dudley town centre development site."

The scheme has been welcomed by English Heritage, who said the development would "potentially help to improve the overall outlook towards the town centre from the castle".

Chris McPherson, development director for Cavendish Quarter Properties, said: "A significant amount of work has gone into all aspects of this scheme to ensure it will bring a high quality development that will regenerate the town centre. Cavendish House and the surrounding area has been in need of redevelopment for many years."

Cooking up funds

COUNCIL workers in Wyre Forest have raised £350 for charity by hosting a bake-off. Staff created tasty treats for Children in Need and poorly Kidderminster youngster Charlie Harris Beard. The bake-off followed a successful Wear It Pink campaign.



This is an artist's impression of how the rundown Cavendish House could be transformed into a modern supermarket



View of Cavendish House from Trindle Hill, in Dudley

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NEWS

Free parking extension is under consideration

TOWN leaders in Bewdley are considering extending a free car parking period beyond Christmas following calls from businesses.

Wyre Forest District Council introduced the scheme - which provides free parking after 4pm at all council sites and at Dog Lane on Saturdays and Tuesdays - last month in a bid to boost the festive trade.

The initiative is set to expire on January 13, but traders are calling for it to be extended into the New Year when roadworks will begin in the town.

In response, the council's town centre manager Peter Michael has said the move will be considered.

He said: "The free parking has been successful. We have had a few positive comments and people saying they would like to see it extended."

"The council is going to have to do a sort of balancing act of the goodwill against the loss of parking revenue."

"The scheme runs out in January, something will have been decided by then."

Mr Michael also said he was looking at potentially altering the 4pm scheme so people can park for free from 3pm.

Among the traders who have called for the free parking is Phil Brooks, owner of The Deli@Bewdley, in Load Street.

He made the plea ahead of work which will start on the town's pavements and bridge in the New Year.

He said: "We will all face a bit of disruption, so any help we can get from the council would obviously be appreciated."

Migrants drop is praised

NEW figures showing immigration has fallen by almost a quarter have been welcomed by Dudley MP Chris Kelly.

The statistics show migration at its lowest level since 2004. Mr Kelly said: "People in the region will be pleased to see immigration under control."

'Spanner' stops meeting



Protesters opposed to 175 new homes but the meeting was cancelled

PROTESTORS opposing plans for 175 new homes in the countryside near Stourbridge turned up at a crunch meeting - to find it had been cancelled at the 11th hour.

Bromsgrove District Council's planning chairman revealed a spanner was thrown in the works" by a last-minute legal hitch.

A letter was received by the council at 1.30pm - four-and-a-half hours before the planning committee meeting - from a barrister representing Hagley and Clent Parish Councils.

It claimed, because the land at Hagley was earmarked to be removed from the green belt for

development, a public forum would need to rule upon whether it was economically, socially and environmentally "sustainable" before any planning application was decided.

Dozens of villagers had turned up expecting to have their showdown with the planners, urging that councillors should reject the proposals by Cala Homes to build on land owned by Viscount Cobham, of Hagley Hall.

But they were met at the doors to the council house by planning chairman, Councillor Richard Deeming, who said: "We all wanted a decision tonight but this has thrown a spanner in the works."

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LETTERS

Press redress for ordinary people

I HAVE a somewhat ambivalent view on governmental control of the Press. Even though it now seems that this would be, in cricketing terms, a kind of 'long stop', there are always reasons why our freedoms depend upon some conduit for free speech.

In homing in on the despicable actions of certain sections of the Press, specifically phone hacking, we should never forget the importance of the media in highlighting problems with the establishment, public services, big business etc and in fact we should be careful when legislating for an organ which calls government to account.

Freedom of the Press paramount for society

I WRITE with regard to the arguments raging both for and against the possibility of legally enforced press restrictions.

I am firmly of the opinion it would be a huge retrograde step to curb the power of the Press as to render it so toothless as to be continually looking over its shoulder, and to be consulting its legal representatives, even before putting thoughts into words.

I have always been under the impression this little island of ours was a democracy, and fully believe the freedom of the Press is of paramount importance to democracy.

If these draconian measures were to indeed become ensconced in law, I can it being a backwards step. What happened to I may not agree with what you say but I will defend with my life your right to say it?

B PARSONS
Millard Road, Coseley

The Press should not be rendered impotent to criticise this august body. Government control may start in a small way but this may, over a period of years be the thin end of a very nasty wedge. I would also point out that there are powers already of a criminal nature to control the excesses.

The problem in hacking was not Press control, it was the fact that the police, judiciary and other arms of the establishment turned a blind eye or were complicit in what was going on.

There is one area which I feel does

need to be brought under control however. This is one which would properly

protect from defamatory articles, people who do not have either the knowledge or indeed the funds to battle Press barons. The wishy-washy apology of two lines hidden away on page 28 is not good enough. What is needed in this respect is a body positioned well away from the Press, and in no way resembling the present useless Press Complaints set up, to which ordinary people can turn. This body would have the statutory power to enable people to fully publicise their position in the offending newspaper.

ALAN M. ETHERIDGE,
Catholic Lane, Dudley

LETTERS to the Editor

POST

Dudley Chronicle, Chronicle Editorial, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton WV1 1ES

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Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number of the writer. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Not a big fan of the mobility scooters

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There will be no road tax to pay, no insurance, and definitely no safety equipment to buy. What could be more exhilarating? It may be that over time you notice a slight walk of the muscles in your legs, or you may suffer from shortage of breath - do not worry. Just pop along to your local NHS outlet, and they will patch you up for free.

You will then be raring to go again and join the other bone-idle owners of the wonderful geri-cart on the fast-track to oblivion. Mind how you go now.

MRS VICKY STARKEY, Roper Way, Woodsetton

Tell us PM how are we all in this together?

How many times have got to listen to the garbage Cameron keeps saying "we are in it together".

Most of us are in it up to our necks, but does he or his cronies care? Nearly every day we hear what can we cut, and how much by?

How much more can we tax the ordinary working man without them noticing. How many more pensioners can we let die so that we can cut the pensions.

Has he or any MP noticed - we are not in it together? I have not seen any of the MPs' monies cut, or any of them thrown out of a job. The same goes for local government. What services can we cut or how much can we put the rates up by so that we can keep ourselves in a job plus our normal daily job? Yes we are all in it together, but some are sinking faster.

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NEWS

Church building saved in move by worshippers

FIVE years ago, the future of a Dudley church looked bleak. In 2007, after 125 years, Woodsetton Methodist Church was faced with being bulldozed.

Its congregation had been unable to find the six-figure sum that was needed for repairs. But now, as the building prepares to celebrate 130 years, a new church group is moving into the venue.

Members of the Seventh-day Adventist congregation have outgrown their site in Himley Road and will now move in to the Parkes Hall Road building.

David Majaducon, pastor of the congregation, said: "The property has a good size of land. Parking in Dudley is very difficult so when we saw the land behind the two buildings we knew we could have a car park for churchgoers and visitors.

"They are also two beautiful buildings."

In December 2007, it was reported how the church's last set of parishioners had been saddened by the news the building had to be closed.

Some had fought for a stay of execution while they made efforts to raise the £100,000 they needed to fix it but this was refused.

Mr Majaducon said the Seventh-day Adventist Church had already spent well over £200,000 on the buildings, including repairs. He said the group had refurbished the building and given it a new car park and, while there were still a few more things to do on his list of improvements, the main hall was ready for church services.

The group will introduce itself to the community with a Christmas Cantata on December 15, he said, before celebrating its 130th birthday. It starts at 4.30pm.

Plea for run volunteers

VOLUNTEERS running an annual fun day in Netherton Park are appealing for fundraisers to help support next year's event. Details from: friends@nethertonpark.com.

Former pupils reunited

HUNDREDS of ex-pupils from a Tipton school took a trip down memory lane at a reunion.

The old school may have long been demolished and the name changed, but there was plenty to discuss between the former students of Willingsworth High School. From tales of caning in front of class to sports days in the sun, ex-pupils of all ages shared their memories at Tipton Social Club recently.

Brothers Mark and Paul Hazel were there. Metal-worker Mark, aged 47, and self-employed Paul, 42, both of Coronation Road, shared memories of punishments.

Mark said: "Teachers were stricter back then. I was caned six times in front of the class for letting off a fire extinguisher. It's something you don't forget."

Paul said: "I got the pump for forgetting my towel for PE. That was a



Organiser Joanne Fitzpatrick, and her daughter, Kirsty-Lea, surrounded by other ex-pupils of the school

slap on the bottom six times with a slipper. I can remember it hurt."

He added: "Aside from that, I really enjoyed my time at the school."



The reunion for former pupils of Willingsworth High School at the Tipton Sports Academy Social Club, in Wednesbury Oak Road, Tipton.

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NEWS

Sung from the heart



Lauren Alexandra has released a Christmas single to raise funding for Heart Research UK

A SCHOOLGIRL singer has released a single to raise funds for Heart Research UK.

Lauren Alexandra, aged 15, from Bewdley, has recorded Where Are You Christmas? which is available to download.

The original, released by American country singer Faith Hill, featured in the 2000 Dr Seuss film How The Grinch Stole Christmas.

A student at Bewdley School & Sixth Form, Lauren has announced all profits from her first single will be going to Heart Research UK.

Lauren, who is the voice of the charity's Sing For Your Heart campaign, explains: "It's such an emotive time of year."

She said: "So many people have all come together to make this happen in such a short space of time."

The singer will be performing the song throughout the Midlands as part of the sixth national Sing For Your Heart week. The national campaign runs until December 15.

Alongside Lauren, nine schools, with around 300 pupils and teachers, will also be performing at the fundraising concerts.

John Lloyd, from Heart Research UK, said: "This has been our most ambitious Sing for Your Heart campaign in the Midlands yet but we're absolutely delighted with the support we have had from local schools."

Two year ban on fishing at pool is set to be removed

ANGLERS banned from a pool at a beauty spot for two years will be allowed to start fishing there again. The pool is at the 67-hectare Leasowes site in Halesowen.

It was closed to anglers so the area surrounding it could recover from what was described as overuse. Concerns were also raised after two ducks became caught in fishing lines and died. Dudley Council has now declared the area recovered and, while they will continue to monitor the site, anglers will be welcomed back early next year.

Councillor Tracy Wood, said: "We hope to meet with the anglers' representatives in January and, following this meeting, we will be announcing our plans for the re-introduction of fishing to The Leasowes in 2013."

She added: "The Leasowes is a beautiful historic landscape and it is important that it feels open and accessible to all whether dog walkers, bird watchers, golfers, anglers, or just families enjoying a pleasant day out."

"Thanks to the support of responsible anglers during this temporary suspension, the delicate balance of the pools has been restored."

Fishing would again be allowed at four spots at Leasowes Pool and it is hoped there would be none of the littering and night fishing from a small group of anglers that prompted the ban.

Campaigners were tight-lipped remained tight-lipped about lifting the ban.

Marianne Diller, of Friends of the Leasowes, refused to comment, and Marion Harvey, who had previously been outspoken against the lifting of the ban, would not comment over the phone.

The Leasowes pool is one of three council-managed pools across the borough.

Fishing is permitted at four designated spots at Leasowes Pool. A licence is not required at The Leasowes.

Environment Agency representatives visit the area regularly, and anyone found fishing without a licence at licensed pools could be fined.



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Proposal for new hotel could provide 65 jobs

PREMIER Inn has unveiled plans to open an 80-bed hotel and restaurant on a main route into Stourbridge, in a move which could create up to 65 jobs.

The chain has lodged plans for the £6 million development on land off Birmingham Street, which will be shortly left vacant by Cox Hire Ltd. The scheme includes a Brewers Fayre restaurant.

Bosses say the hotel would provide a boost for local business and tourism. It would come hot on the heels of work starting on a 63-bed hotel in Dudley.

A planning application for the Stourbridge site has been sent to Dudley Council by Whitbread Property Plc and Barberry Developments.

Cox Hire Ltd is moving to a site in

Netherton. The application said the scheme would create "an exciting gateway development for Stourbridge".

An L-shaped four-storey hotel would be built with a 122 space car park.

A report from agent Turley Associates says: "In addition to providing new job opportunities, the proposal would also support local businesses and encourage increased visitor spending in the area."

Chairman of Stourbridge Township Council Margaret Scott said it was "an interesting development" and she would be looking at the detailed plans.

The developers said around 100 residents and businesses had already been consulted and five letters of support had been sent in.

School celebrates glowing inspection



Headteacher Ruth Wylie, with pupils Kian Smith, eight and Emily Parkes, seven, with, top, Opal Whyte, seven, Layla Henry, eight, and Jack Bradley, seven

STAFF and pupils at a primary school in Dudley are celebrating after it was rated "good with outstanding features" in an Ofsted inspection.

Wren's Nest Primary School was praised for helping children fulfil their potential.

In a report, inspectors said: "Teaching is good and the help given to pupils with additional needs is outstanding."

They went on to highlight the way in which the school involves parents and carers and how the school's curriculum provides rich and memorable experiences for the pupils. Inspectors also reported how "children behave exceptionally well, feel safe and are very proud of their school".

The school recently underwent a two-year transformation with a £6 million new build taking place.

Headteacher Ruth Wylie said she was "proud" of the school's achievement.

"The parents, pupils and staff have all worked tirelessly."

Trust opening Rock Houses for Christmas

THE National Trust is opening the Kinver Edge Rock Houses for a Christmas event on December 15.

The houses and tea rooms will be decorated with traditional trimmings being made and put up by Year 6 children at Brindley Heath Junior School.

Visitors will be able to tuck into mince pies, roasted chestnuts and hot chocolate.

Laura Broadhurst, community engagement officer at the National Trust, said: "It's really exciting to be able to bring the houses to life for Christmas, we've been overwhelmed by local support for the event and I'm really looking forward to it."

"I think it will definitely get people into the Christmas spirit." There will be a Christmas Trail that takes children on a hunt for Father Christmas. The event will run from 10am to 3pm.

Two are guilty of killing

TWO friends have been found guilty of manslaughter for attacking a man from Dudley with a baseball bat and a wooden pole.

Ismaaeel Rehman died of his injuries after being hit on the head. Mr Rehman, of Surrey Road, Holly Hall, Dudley, had gone to drug dealer Jason Noto's flat in Telford with the intention of either buying or robbing cannabis from him, a jury at Birmingham Crown Court had been told.

Mr Rehman had turned up with his friend Robert Jones, known as Tyson. Noto grabbed a baseball bat from inside the flat and attacked the trainee carpenter. Eyewitnesses told the jury

he was dragged up and ordered to 'get on his knees and pray' by Noto before being smashed over the head and knocked unconscious with the bat by factory worker Jones.

The pair continued to beat Mr Rehman, who was 22 at the time of the attack in July 2009, before he managed to stagger away.

He was found lying nearby and rushed to hospital with a fractured skull, bleeding on the brain, a fractured cheekbone and bruising all over his body. Neurosurgeon Rupert Price had earlier told the jury Mr Rehman would have died within days if he had not been operated on.

He was in recovery after spending months in rehabilitation centres but died on New Year's Day 2011, aged 24,

after suffering a massive epileptic seizure. Prosecuting counsel Mr Andrew O'Byrne said it was clear Mr Rehman had developed epilepsy as a result of the assault and there was a 'direct causal link' between the attack and his death nearly 18 months later.

Noto, 24, of Powis Place, Dawley Bank, Telford, and Jones, also 24, of Webb Crescent, Dawley, Telford, had both denied murder. A jury returned verdicts of manslaughter against both men after more than 10 hours of deliberations yesterday.

Speaking after the verdict, Mr Rehman's mother Khurshed said: "Our lives will never be the same, he never will have the opportunity to have children, or us grandparents to his children."

Report call on potholes

Recent heavy rainfall and plummeting temperatures may create potholes - and Worcestershire County Council wants people to report them quickly.

It spent £60 million in three years to improve roads, including finding and fixing about 33,000 problems caused in winter.

Councillor John Smith, said: "If you spot a problem, let us know - the sooner we know about it, the sooner we can come out and have it fixed." People can report potholes at www.worcestershire.gov.uk/myservice/pothole.aspx

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Musicians add to the festivities

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EVERYONE brought in food and the club provided the drinks for a marvellous time at our Christmas social evening.

Entertainment was provided by Rob Norman, a talented keyboard player, and Hannah, a beautiful singer, who treated members with songs from shows.

Some of our ladies had recently been to see Les Misérables at the Stafford Gatehouse Theatre and they experienced some wonderful reminders of that show.

It was a special evening for all of us and we also enjoyed singing along with some Christmas carols and other songs.

Much laughter ensued when we realised that most of us could only remember the first verse of these well-known songs.

Sixteen ladies went to a special evening at Bon Marche, Cannock, on November 27 where we had a chance to purchase clothes.

Staff provided nibbles and a raffle where the proceeds, £32, going to Air Ambulance along with the £57 raised by Beth Poole's hamper.

We will also add to this the money collected in lieu of Christmas cards on the social evening. Many thanks to Paul, the caretaker, for all his help all year.

Today (Thur) we are holding our Christmas Meal at The Terrace and our first meeting next year is on January 17 when the National Trust will provide a talk on Calke Abbey.

Annual meeting returns officers

KINGSWINFORD AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BLACKHEATH M TWG

CHAIRMAN Doreen Armstrong welcomed speaker Mr John Smith and 47 members to the November meeting.

Reports were given by treasurer Mrs Beryl Hartley, press secretary, Mrs Iris Harris and Christmas lunch co-ordinator Miss Evelyn Edwards.

Heather Greenland conducted the free monthly raffle and three ladies received prizes of handkerchiefs.

Mr Smith's talk was entitled Radio Memories and members were taken back in time to wonderful music and talks, from as early as 1933.

Included in the talk were recordings of such old programmes and supporting music as In Town Tonight, Dick Barton Special Agent, Desert Island Discs, Band Wagon and recordings of the voices of Billy Cotton, Arthur Askey, Richard Murdoch and Kenneth Horne.

He ended his talk with a recording of the wonderful voice of Sir Harry Secombe singing Keep a Welcome.

A vote of thanks was given by Iris Harris and a cheque from members was presented. After refreshments the meeting was closed.

THE society holds its 21st annual meeting at the Kingswinford Community Centre on December 1.

After the secretary's report on the past year's activities and the treasurer's report that the society was in a good financial position, the following officers and committee were re-elected: chairman, Brenda Arthur; vice-chairman Ray James; membership secretary, Ena Jones; speaker secretary, Betty Holding; treasurer, Ron Julian and committee members Joyce Burns, Michael Jackson and Mavis James.

The formal part of the meeting was followed by light refreshments and wine together with musical entertainment provided by the Eve Evans Experience.

There will be no meeting in January and the programme resumes next February at 7.30 pm in the community centre when Ned Williams will be speaking on Brierley Hill Local History.

All are welcome, new members especially. For an annual membership fee of £4 and a monthly payment of £1.50, to include tea and biscuits, you are guaranteed an interesting evening.

HAWNE E TWG

November 22. Several trips are planned for 2013. Tickets booked for Wind in the Willows, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham. Inquiries were made for a British Classics concert at the Symphony Hall. The competition was for an unusual

brooch, which Margaret Partridg won. The speakers were Pauline and Trish, talking about crystal and silver jewellery. They explained about the stones that were in them and how the different stones helped our bodies when we wore them.

The books, sales table and raffle did a brisk trade.

MY TIME OVER FIFTIES

LIZ Leck entertained the members and visitors with the history of the Birmingham Hippodrome during the November meeting.

Ms Leck is the theatre's manager of the education department and gave a fascinating talk. The Hippodrome began its life in 1899 as the Tower of Varieties and Circus but unfortunately lasted only six weeks. It reopened in 1900 as the Tivoli Theatre of Varieties and finally in 1903 the theatre became the Hippodrome. Variety shows were twice nightly, even in the Second World War when the audience was given the option of leaving if there was an air raid, but the show went on regardless.

Many famous performers have trod the boards. The 1930s saw the first ice show, and stars such as George Formby and Mantovani. In the 1950s musicals such as Carousel and Annie Get Your Gun became more popular and the first pantomime took place in 1957. The 1960s saw rebuilding. The wooden tower that had stood since 1899 was found to be rotten and demolished, changing the Birmingham skyline.

The Beatles appeared twice in 1963, March and November, by which time they had become famous and were smuggled out of the theatre disguised as police! It closed in 1999 for redevelopment, including facilities for the Birmingham Royal Ballet.

The second speaker, Jenny Ballwood, of Age UK, gave details of the SpringBoard programme for people aged 50 plus.

The club meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 2pm in the Amblecote Room, Stourbridge Town Hall.

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Dudley North Labour MP Ian Austin takes the stand in our weekly Chronicle column which gives our local representatives the chance to air their views

"It's a tax cut worth an average of £107,000 for 8,000 millionaires.
Whose side are they on?"

has gone up, and borrowing is actually going up, not down, to pay for it!

The way to get the benefit bill down is to get the economy moving and get people in Dudley back to work.

We need to tax bank bonuses to fund a job for every young person out of work for more than 12 months – a job they would have to take up.

We should use the unspent money in one of the Government's failed schemes to give every small business taking on extra workers a one-year National Insurance holiday.

We shouldn't be giving the richest people in the country a £3billion tax cut, when millions of families and pensioners are paying more. And we shouldn't be wasting £3billion on a reckless reorganisation of the NHS.

Christmas Card competition

At around the end of November every year my desk is covered in Christmas cards designed by kids at local primary schools and I have the difficult task of choosing one to go on the front of my Parliamentary Christmas card.

This year the standard was as high as ever but in the end I selected a picture of Rudolph in mid-flight over a snow-covered Dudley Castle designed by Erika Shelley of Stratas Primary School.

I've had it professionally printed and it will soon be finding its way through the doors of hundreds of people in Dudley and across the country. I'll be going down to the school on Friday to say well done and present her with her prize.

than me if that were true. But don't believe a word of it. Six out of ten households affected are actually in work, according to independent experts.

Revenues

And when the economy isn't doing well and more people are out of work for longer, the Government gets in less money from tax revenues and has to pay more out in benefits.

That is why David Cameron and George Osborne are now failing even on the one test they set themselves — to balance the books and get the debt down by 2015.

I'm afraid it's hard-working families in places such as Dudley who are paying the price.

The Tories claim they're cracking down on the work shy. Benefit scroungers who won't get out of bed and go to work.

No one would cheer louder

for a one-parent family on £20,000 with two children will lose £279 a year from all the Government's changes next April — on top of the cost of higher VAT — according to the independent House of Commons Library.

No wonder some have already said this is effectively a tax on striving families.

Whose side are they on?

Everyone knows savings have got to be made to balance the books, but instead of trying to get the deficit down in a steady and balanced way — giving the economy some breathing space to grow — the Government went recklessly fast and choked off the recovery.

As a result unemployment

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* The "from" price and price bands vary for each show – see brochure for details. Single room supplements apply.

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or go to expressandstar.com/starextratravel

Please read brochure/web page for full information plus terms and conditions

Four Main Vauxhall Dealers Join Forces To Offer Motorists Affordable Vehicle Winter Care.

Dudley Motor Company, T Wall Garages, Stourbridge Motor House and Halesowen Motor House have joined together to provide low cost winter safety care to motorists throughout the West Midlands. Rob Gilbert, general manager of Dudley Motor Company says, "We recognise the importance of offering drivers affordable solutions to make sure their vehicles are safe and reliable over the winter months. This is of course especially relevant given the increased instances of unexpected and extreme weather conditions experienced over recent years".

The four sites are offering an Anti-



freeze check for just £1.99 plus a free tin of de-icer. The anti-freeze level is something that often gets forgotten about, but really is so important. Anti-freeze is vital to the coolant system of your car and in modern engines it prevents extremes in temperature, both hot and cold. It also prevents electrolysis which causes pitting and corrosion. Over time the concentration of the anti-freeze diminishes and it is vital that it is replenished otherwise the engine may sustain irreversible damage. With this check for just £1.99 you may save yourself a small fortune in the cost of engine repairs.

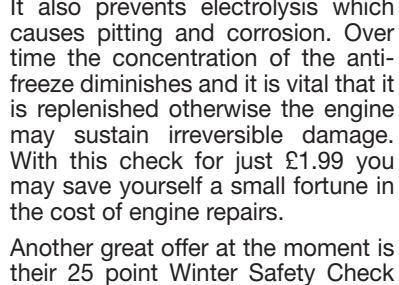
Another great offer at the moment is their 25 point Winter Safety Check

for only £35 which inspects your vehicle's brakes, tyres, exhaust, steering, wiper blades and much more. They also check your engine oil, brake fluid and radiator coolant, topping up where necessary, up to half a litre. Plus they are currently offering a free Winter Care Pack worth 20 RRP with every Winter Safety Check!

These main Vauxhall dealers are part of a family-run business which has been caring for the motoring needs of people in the West Midlands for almost 60 years. They won the Vauxhall Chairman's Award for excellence in 2011 for customer service and have continued to exceed the expectations of their customers ever since. As well as



superb New and Used car sales facilities they have also built up Service departments that are second to none. Their workshops contain all the latest diagnostic equipment and specialist tools and their technicians are fully trained, so customers can be reassured their vehicles are in the safest hands. They provide quality servicing and MOTs, using high quality parts and oils, for all makes and models of car and at very affordable prices. All the sites are also really happy to help with any concerns or questions you have about your vehicle, so always feel free to pop in and see them. We wish you safe and happy motoring throughout the season.



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MEMORY LANE



George Formby meets Walsall Mayor Dr E P Drabble



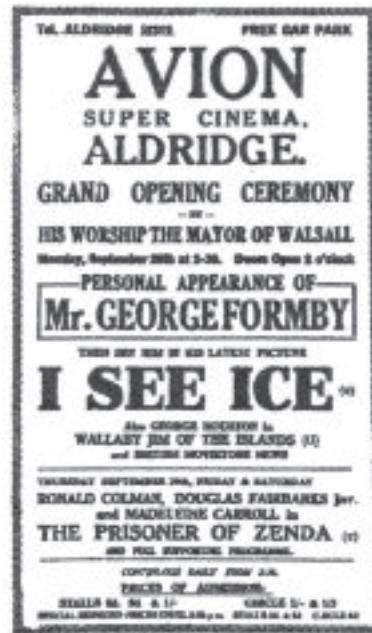
The magnificent proscenium stage at The Avion



Avion staff pictured sometime in the 1950s



The Avion's luxurious foyer circa 1938



An advert for the opening of the new cinema

Book on cinema is the last work of historian

by Tom Mason

A BOOK based upon the scrapbooks of a cinema manager was launched last week by friends of an Aldridge author, who dedicated the last years of his life to its research.

The Avion, by the late author and historian Harry Dennant, tells the stories behind the village's cinema. The grand picture palace was focal point of the community during its heyday during the golden age of Hollywood and also saw live performances from top entertainers, such as George Formby.

The book was largely derived from the scrapbooks of the general manager Harry Russell, who worked there for 20 years, as well as from firsthand accounts of patrons and former staff recorded by Mr Dennant since 2007.

The Avion Cinema De Luxe was built by businessman Albert Brain and opened in September 26, 1938, to bring a touch of Hollywood glamor to Aldridge.

As well as being a cinema showing American and British movies, The Avion also put on shows and in its later years, like so many cinemas, became a bingo hall.

It hosted George Formby for its grand opening before the war but the premises also saw many other stars after it introduced variety acts in 1950.

Comedian

These included comedian Larry Grayson, famous for hosting The Generation Game and his 'Shut That Door' catchphrase, pianist Semprini and Irish crooner Val Doonican with his group The Ramblers.

Aldridge jockey Johnny Bullock, winner of the 1951 Grand National on 40-1 outsider Nickel Coin, was guest of honour at The Avion to watch a newsreel of his famous victory.

In 1973 an Aldridge man, Harry Whitehouse, purchased the building and converted it into the popular

Legalite Bingo Hall, and it remained in his family until his death in 1993 at the age of 83. It was taken over by Jarglen and later Gala Bingo before being abandoned in 2009.

The building was partially demolished but its shell is to be turned into a JD Wetherspoons pub under plans approved by Walsall Council.

In her foreword, the book's editor Sue Satterthwaite said: "There could be no one better than Harry Dennant to write a book about The Avion. Harry loved the place but sadly he died before his work could be completed."

Proceeds from sales of the book, priced £55 will go to two local charities - Rosie's Helping Hands, a charity which Harry supported, and St Giles Walsall Hospice where the author spent the final days of his life.

The book is available from several local outlets. These include Aldridge Library, in Rookery Lane, Aldridge; Scrumptious Sweets and Treats, Anchor Parade, Aldridge; Lynda's Pets and Plants Walsall Wood Road, Aldridge; and Waterstones, in Park Street, Walsall.

THE AVION ALDRIDGE



From the revised work of

HARRY DENNANT

Edited by Sue Satterthwaite

Harry Dennant's book on the village's movie palace



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CHRISTMAS

Hilda and Harry's house lets it glow for a festive spectacle



Hilda and Harry Creaney's house in Willenhall is like a real life grotto after they went all out decorating it with trees, lights and decorations



A family of Santas are among the decorations inside the house in Walsall Street



Tracy, Hilda, Harry, and Dawn are pictured outside their super festive house



George Hall, of Swallowfields Road, Sedgley, with grandchildren Myles and Cameron Davies



Neil Robbins outside his home in Douglas Road, Smethwick, which has a giant polar bear in the garden

IT has been a festive attraction in the Black Country for years and with hundreds of Santas, snowmen, baubles and tinsel there is no doubt Hilda Creaney's semi-detached house is well and truly ready for Christmas 2012.

More than 1,000 decorations adorn the hallway and living room of the house in Walsall Street, Willenhall, which Hilda shares with her husband Harry. And outside the front door, along with the bright decorations which include Santas, reindeer and stars, stands a postbox which each year gets around 300 letters for Santa from children, all of which receive a reply.

Inside the house Santas, snowmen, penguins, angels and elves are arranged on the ceiling, walls and every flat surface, costing from 50p to £400.

The retired social work assistant said she loves this time of year: "I love Christmas and I love to see the children's faces when they see what we've done here. The local nursery school come up to see the house and I always show them the crib in the hall and tell them that is what Christmas is really about."

Her preparations for the Christmas season start in the middle of November when the boxes of baubles, tinsel and other decorations are brought out of storage at a nephew's factory. Putting the lights on the front of the house is another big job which is carried out by Hilda's grandson Jamie and friends.

The interior of the family's cosy home is transformed into a Christmas grotto with the big switch-on taking place on the last Saturday in November when about 25 friends and family travel from Wales, Telford and Birmingham for the occasion. The tradition, which started nearly

40 years ago, was inspired by a Yuletide-themed picture which her three children coloured in. Carl, now 49 and a Walsall councillor, Tracy, 47, and Dawn, 37, and their friends worked for days on the artwork. Dad Harry was so impressed he mounted the picture in a glass-fronted box with a strip light and displayed it in the bay window.

Harry says: "People ask whether I get depressed when it all has to come down and it's true that I do. But on the other hand, it's a chance to give the house a proper clean and that makes me feel good, too."

The Creaneys are one of a number of householders around the region who have been getting into the Christmas spirit with inflatable snowmen, illuminated Santas and reindeers on hand to help residents create the perfect Christmas display.

Covered

Grandfather-of-seven George Hall transformed his Sedgley home into a winter wonderland with an inflatable snowman in the garden. The display, which takes more than a week to put up, also has a flashing candle, Christmas trees and Santas on the roof.

Cascading icicle lights hanging from the roof complete the lights display which has been collected over the years.

The 66-year-old, of Swallowfields Road, said: "I'm still a big kid at heart and Christmas is a magical time of the year."

Wendy and Chris Fletcher have covered the front of their home on Stafford Road, Wolverhampton, with an array of lights and other decorations including a giant snow dome.

It took them from 9.30 in the morning until 8 at night to get everything out and up but say it was well worth the effort.

Mrs Fletcher, a mother-of-five said: "This year

we decided to add some extra lights as we thought we wanted to brighten things up a bit and we have already decided to do even more next year when we plan to have a light show. Usually we take all the children out to have a look at other people's houses but this year it is nice that a few people have stopped to look at ours."

Another house where the lights are shining brightly belongs to Neil Robbins home in Douglas Road, Smethwick.

He has a giant bear as well as a reindeer and train which both light up in the garden with many more decorations on the front and the side of the house itself.

A father from Oldbury has dressed his house for Christmas with 17 different sets of lights, a polar bear and a Christmas train.

Neil Robbins, has spent the last two weeks making his home on Douglas Road the talk of the town, by covering it in lights and decorations for Christmas.

He started decorating his house this way around eight years ago when his three children were small. The decorations include reindeer, a polar bear, snowmen and a train.

The 30-year-old said: "I am just a big kid at heart and absolutely love it. Nobody else round here really decorates their homes, but I just love the reaction I get from passersby. The other day a family came and sat outside the house in their car for around half an hour, just to look at the lights."

The mini bus driver also likes to decorate his bus during the festive period.

He said: "I do some driving for The Orchard School, and the children just love to see the bus all Christmassy, it really makes people smile."



Wendy Fletcher with Daniel, Chris, Ben, Nathan and Jamie Fletcher in Wolverhampton

Inside: your best of Yuletide television and a page of puzzles

CHRISTMAS

Wildlife takes on an entirely new dimension



David Attenborough goes 3D on Sky

SIR DAVID ATTENBOROUGH'S new 3D series on the Galapagos Islands has been confirmed as part of Sky's Christmas and New Year schedules.

The multi-award-winning natural history broadcaster's fourth collaboration with Sky will use pioneering 3D techniques and technology to explore the unique environments and species of the Galapagos in a three-part series.

"It's only now that the latest developments in camera technology have given us the possibility of filming the full range of wildlife in 3D, and the first place I wanted to put that to the test was the Galapagos," said Attenborough.

"I mean, lizards that swim, swim down to the bottom of the seabed and graze seaweed, has to be really an extraordinary thing."

Other treats on Sky over the festive season include *Daniel Radcliffe* and *Mad Men*'s *Jon Hamm*'s critically acclaimed *A Young Doctor's Notebook*, which will air on Sky Arts, and a new series of *Little Crackers* comedy shorts, with *Darren Boyd*, *Rebecca Front* and *Joanna Lumley* among the comics signed up.

There will be Christmas specials for Sky1 and Sky Living sitcoms including *Spy*, *Trollied* and *Mount Pleasant*, while Sky Atlantic will air HBO's Emmy-nominated drama *Hemingway & Gellhorn*, which has been a huge hit on the opposite side of the Atlantic.

The Sky Movies Christmas Channel is also back in business, with *The Muppets* and *The Adventures of Tintin: The Secret of the Unicorn* among the new



The unusual suspects . . . Bad Santas

films on show.

Bad Santas is a two-part documentary following a group of unemployed men with difficult pasts as they try to make a fresh start, at Santa School.

The Channel Four show follows a group of unemployed men in their 50's as they are taken through their paces at the UK's most successful Santa School - but only the best will make it into the grottos in time for Christmas.

In true Christmas spirit, *James Lovell*, Managing Director of Ministry of Fun, is offering a unique opportunity to this carefully selected group of men, each who have had a difficult past and are looking to make a fresh start.

James wants to give them the chance to regain their confidence and find employment.

Whilst working with the MOF, the men must attend Santa School and pass a number of challenges from learning how to wear a Santa costume with confidence, how to perfect the art of a jolly 'ho ho ho', learn the most popular toys for Christmas and most importantly, how to deal with those tricky questions from children.



Joseph Morgan plays Ben Hur in the new drama

A TV miniseries version of sword-and-sandals classic *Ben Hur* is a cornerstone of Channel Five's festive programme.

This take on Lewis Wallace's 1880 novel is a Canadian/German co-production shot in Morocco, but littered with familiar faces.

Marc Warren is a surly zealot, *Ben Cross* plays an emperor, and there are cameos from *Ray Winstone* and *Hugh Bonneville*. *Joseph Morgan* plays *Judah Ben Hur* while *Stephen Campbell Moore* smoulders as his Roman nemesis *Messala*.



Doctor Who hooks up with his new assistant Jenna-Louise Coleman, in the Christmas Day special



Miranda Hart returns for two festive specials, and Gary Barlow is among the men in her firing line



Fabrice Muamba, Bobby Ball, Katy Brand and Jonathan JB' Gill are among the Strictly stars

A festive feast

CHRISTMAS Day looks set to be the battle of the period dramas, as ITV and BBC both unleash festive one-off episodes of their biggest hitters, *Downton Abbey* and *Call The Midwife*.

One-off specials have become very much the flavour of the Christmas season in recent years, and 2012 is no exception.

Doctor Who unveils his new assistant, Strictly Come Dancing returns with a mix of fascinating newbies and former champions, and the *Royle Family*'s 2011 episode - which never made it onto our screens - finally arrives 12 months late.

And fans of enchanting animation *The Snowman* will be walking in the air when they hear the news that a new version of the much loved tale is on its way, to mark the 30th anniversary of the original.

Here's a dozen good reasons why you won't want to stray too far from the TV set over the Christmas season:

DOCTOR WHO (BBC1) This year's time-travelling special, called *The Snowmen*, officially introduces Jenna-Louise Coleman as The Doctor's new companion Clara.

It also features *Richard E Grant* as the villainous Doctor Simeon and familiar characters Vastra, Strax and Jenny, who are there to support The Doctor.

Writer and executive producer *Steven Moffat* teased details of the new episode in a chat for the BBC Doctor Who blog.

He said: "The Doctor at Christmas is one of my favourite things - but this year it's different. He's lost Amy and Rory to the Weeping Angels, and he's not in a good place: in fact, he's Scrooge."

"He's withdrawn from the world and no longer cares what happens to it. So when all of humanity hangs in the balance, can anyone persuade a tired and heartbroken Doctor that it's time to return to the good fight? Enter Jenny-Louise Coleman..."

Doctor Who star *Matt Smith* added: "For this year's Christmas Special we have the wonderfully villainous *Richard E Grant* as Doctor Simeon. As well as lizards, Victorian assassins and deranged warriors from the future all return to convince The Doctor that he should board the Tardis again and save the world."

"Add to that Jenna-Louise Coleman and so begins the Christmas Special 2012. It does the sort of wonderful Doctor Who-ey Christmas things - you know, snow, aliens, good will, good cheer, someone trying to take over the world..."

DOWNTON ABBEY (ITV1) The Crawleys go off on their holidays in the two-hour *Downton Abbey* special, leaving the servants to fend for themselves.

Lord Grantham and his family are heading north to the Scottish Highlands to join the Dowager Countess's great niece *Lady Rose* and her parents at *Dunagle Castle*.

The headstrong *Lady Rose* (*Lily James*) was sent home in the last episode of series three after a dalliance with a married man.

Initially, a warm welcome awaits, but the tensions between the family and their hosts soon become clear.

We're promised "salacious scandals, clandestine courtships and heartbreaks of seasons past" will all come to a head during the feature-length episode.

And while it may well snow (it is Scotland, after all) don't expect Christmas decorations or another stilted presentation as the seasonal special is, in fact, set in September.

But what of those left back at *Downton*? Will Lord Grantham return to find they've had a massive party and trashed the place with late-night parties and raves?

Stoic head butler *Carson* is of course determined to prevent this, but with the excitement of the approaching country fair, it's possible some of the staff could be tempted to push their luck.

Speaking of luck, it seems romance could be in the air for chirpy cook *Mrs Patmore*, while personal servant *O'Brien* finds a kindred spirit below stairs in the form of *Susan's lady's maid Wilkins*.

CALL THE MIDWIFE (BBC1) The Beeb has produced a



75-minute episode of its hit 1950s drama which those who have seen a sneak preview say serves up festive cheer in spades.

It's 1957, Poplar's cobbled streets have a dusting of snow and *Nonnatus House* is busier than ever.

Chummy (*Miranda Hart*) is now married, but her husband *PC Noakes* hardly gets a look in as she begins choreographing a Nativity play for the local cub scouts that soon snowballs into an epic.

Nurse Jenny (*Jessica Raine*), meanwhile, finds herself being stalked to each and every birth by a batty old crone called *Mrs Jenkins* - well known on the local birthing scene but generally dismissed as a bit of a nutcase.

But with Christmas being the season of goodwill, *Nurse Jenny* finds it in her heart to offer help rather than hindrance, and it is her investigation into *Mrs Jenkins* and her past that forms the backbone of the episode's plot.

Daily Telegraph reviewer *Benji Wilson* says: "If all of that sounds a little mawkish, it comes, as did the first series of *Call the Midwife*, with just enough social realism to sugar the pill - or more accurately pill the sugar. In amongst the warm-hearted gurning, *Call the Midwife* is not afraid to address the bigger issues like abortion, social housing, the resounding wonder of the NHS, or the merits or otherwise of close communities."

THE SNOWMAN AND THE SNOWDOG (CH4) The centrepiece of Channel Four's Christmas season is the long-awaited return of *The Snowman* in a brand new sequel to the much-loved original, which first screened 30 years ago.

Adapted for the screen from *Raymond Briggs'* book in

1982, the Oscar-nominated film - wordless, apart from its evocative theme, *Walking in the Air* - has been screened by Channel 4 every year since it was first transmitted and has enchanted generations of children.

On the 30th anniversary of the original film, *Briggs* has given his blessing to a brand-new sequel and the magic is about to begin all over again, this time with a new set of friends.

When a young boy and his mother move house, the boy discovers a secret box hidden under the floorboards of his bedroom. In the box, he finds a hat, scarf, some lumps of coal and a shrivelled tangerine - it's a snowman-making kit! Later that day it starts to snow and the boy builds a Snowman and, with the little spare snow leftover, a Snowdog. That night, at the stroke of midnight, the Snowman and Snowdog magically come to life.

The boy awakes and joins them on an amazing adventure, flying over London and onwards to the North Pole, where Snowmen and Snowwomen from around the world are gathering for 'The Annual Downhill Race.'

Competing with an assortment of colourful characters, the boy and the Snowdog narrowly win the race and are rewarded with a prize from Father Christmas. Dawn is breaking so the boy stows the present unopened into his pocket for the journey back. When he arrives home, the boy must leave his new friends outside and return to bed - but first, a wonderful surprise awaits him ...

THE GIRL (BBC2) *Sienna Miller* may not be most famous for being *Jude Law's* on-off girlfriend for much longer. The British model-turned-actress takes centre

CHRISTMAS



Gordon Ramsay will be doing his live Christmas Day cookalong again, with some familiar faced guests



Sienna Miller as Tippi Hedren in *The Girl*, based on the woman who was Alfred Hitchcock's obsession



The Snowman and the Snowdog, a new version of the enchanting tale to mark its special anniversary

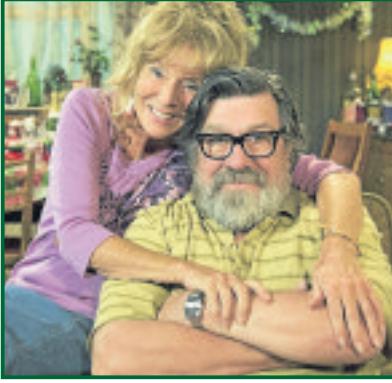
of telly treats



The BBC is bringing back its popular drama, *Call The Midwife*, for a one-off festive special full of cheer



The Crawleys head north in *Downton Abbey*'s Christmas special, filmed at Inveraray Castle in Scotland



Patience is a virtue . . . *The Royle Family* Christmas Special is finally on its way after the false start last year



What's it all about, Alfie? He's about to find out

EASTENDERS

Something's got Alfie Moon looking glum . . . and we can all guess what it is. Details of wife Kat's secret affair, and her web of lies and betrayal, begin to unravel. Alfie's world is torn apart as the truth unfolds. But could he find happiness by finally getting together with Roxy (Rita Simons). Meanwhile, with her feelings bottled up for too long, Lauren goes back to her old ways. Out of control, she lets out a huge secret which has major consequences. It's been widely reported that the death of Derek Branning will be one of the big *EastEnders* Christmas storylines, but bosses are keeping the details about his death tightly under wraps. What is known, though, is that Dot Cotton is set to return in time for this year's explosive episode, having filmed scenes with grand-daughter Abi.



Leanne has one too many on her hen night

CORONATION STREET

Is a Christmas wedding on the cards in Weatherfield? You bet it is - but who is tying the knot?

Publicity manager Alison Sinclair tweeted a teaser picture showing the hem of a white embroidered dress, and one scarlet shoe. "A touch of the Wizard of Oz comes to Corrie," she said.

There are several candidates; Leanne and Nick, Carla and Peter, Kirsty and Tyrone . . . even Julie and Brian (those Judy Garland-style ruby slippers would be right up her retro fashion street). Leanne struggles with her feelings as she gets ready to tie the knot with Nick, and her wicked half sister Eva plots to split them up.

It's set to be an interesting Christmas for mixed-up lovers Marcus and Maria too, when they are paid a visit by his parents Ron and Janet Dent.



Cameron panics, and heads into the woods

EMMERDALE

Emmerdale is set to kill off another character this Christmas as murderer Cameron Murray strikes again, adding another guilty secret to his conscience.

Cameron killed Carl King but remains a free man as his on-off lover Chas Dingle (Lucy Pargeter) is awaiting trial for murder, wrongly believing she delivered the fatal blow. He confesses his guilt to one of the village's residents then realises his honesty was a mistake, and takes his confidante captive before later ending their life, waking next morning in blind panic, and heading to the woods hoping to bury the evidence.

So who's Cameron's victim? Jimmy King, who is planning to bankrupt Chas' defence? Other names in the frame from fans are Gennie Walker, Lisa Dingle, or even Cameron's former girlfriend Debbie Dingle.

stage in this eerie movie, documenting film maker Alfred Hitchcock's obsession with the leading lady of his cult motion picture *The Birds*, Tippi Hedren.

The trailer, which can be found online, shows Hitchcock, played by *The Hunger Games* actor Toby Jones, and Hedren (Miller) having dinner, as the director refers to his new project as 'my most ambitious movie ever.'

Sienna's character Tippi, who became a Hollywood icon after she was cast as the leading lady in the 1963 thriller, tells him: "I'll make you so proud of me. I'll be putty in your hands."

However, as the action cuts to a toast with two Martinis, Hitchcock says: "To Alfred and Tippi", and a look of fear flashes across her face.

The director famously fixated on the actress who became one of his archetypal 'Hitchcock blondes', and Hedren later said it made her life a misery.

STRICTLY COME DANCING CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

(BBC1) Miracle footballer Fabrice Muamba is to crown his comeback from the dead by transferring his nifty footwork to the dancefloor.

The former Bolton Wanderers midfielder - who suffered a heart attack during an FA Cup tie last season - is one of six celebrities competing in the one-off Christmas edition.

The line-up is completed by Jonathan 'JB' Gill from boy band JLS, daredevil Blue Peter presenter Helen Skelton, veteran actress Sheila Hancock, comic Bobby Ball and comedienne Katy Brand.

And the Christmas edition will include show dances from an array of contestants who have dazzled viewers in years

gone by, including Kelly Brook, Rachel Stevens, and the show's first ever champion, newsreader Natasha Kaplinsky. Also taking to the dancefloor will be last year's runner up Chelsee Healey, 2009 winner Chris Hollins and track star Colin Jackson.

Muamba revealed he turned down ITV's *Dancing On Ice*, but said: "I'd do Strictly Come Dancing. I love my salsa, so I'll be well up for that."

GORDON RAMSAY'S CHRISTMAS COOKALONG - LIVE (CH4)

It's Christmas morning. The kids are screaming, grandma's on her third glass of sherry and you've got mountains of uncooked ingredients and no idea what to do with them. You need help. Live from his very own kitchen, Gordon Ramsay will again guide you through Christmas dinner step-by-step, sharing his favourite tips.

If you're being brave, going commando and doing it all at the last minute, Gordon will help get you through it, with viewers invited to get involved through phone calls and tweets. The chef will also be joined by a collection of famous guests who made 2012 go with a bang.

THE ROYLE FAMILY (BBC1)

Postponed from last Christmas due to script delays, this year's Yuletide antics see Dave (Craig Cash) planning to pitch an idea to the Dragons' Den tycoons, while Jim (Ricky Tomlinson) is pinning all his hopes of winning big on a Christmas scratch card. Meanwhile, a new neighbour has moved onto the street, and apparently, the fact that she has an "impressive cleavage" doesn't go unnoticed by widower neighbour Joe (Peter Martin) who's on the lookout for romance. He places an advert in the *Lonely Hearts* column, 'Vacant Lady

Wanted'. Who could resist?

MIRANDA (BBC1) Radio Times TV editor Alison Graham says: "It's been a dizzy few years for Miranda Hart. Her cheerfully silly BBC2 sitcom won a big following - so big that Miranda now treads a well established path to glory by moving to BBC1." There are two festive episodes in the can. In one of them, we return to the joke shop where Take That star and X Factor judge Gary Barlow finds himself in the firing line as a potential new love interest for the socially clumsy heroine.

PANTO! (ITV1) Comedian John Bishop stars as a cheeky DJ who makes his stage debut in a local performance of pantomime Dick Whittington. The eclectic cast also includes Sheridan Smith, most recently seen in acclaimed drama *Mrs Biggs*, plus Waterloo Road star Mark Benton, and 1980s chart star Chesney 'I Am The One And Only' Hawkes.

THE UNSEEN FRANKIE HOWERT (CH4) Titter ye not . . . this 90-minute documentary includes never before seen footage of the late comedian, who led a colourful and tortured private life. It speaks to many who were closest to the Up Pompeii star, and who knew him best.

THE JK ROWLING STORY - MAGIC BEYOND WORDS (FIVE)

An interesting concept, this . . . a made-for-TV movie looking at JK Rowling's rise to become one of the most influential writers, from her humble beginnings as an imaginative young girl and awkward teenager to the loss of her mother and the genesis of the Harry Potter phenomenon.

CHRISTMAS

Festive Puzzles Extra

Word Wise

The following words may sound familiar, but do you know what each means?

1. PECCABLE

- A. Liable to sin
- B. Small farming area
- C. Smart

4. SPIRACLE

- A. Breathing-hole
- B. Tap-root
- C. Long-winded preacher

2. RESIANT

- A. Pliable
- B. Resident
- C. That which is left

3. SEGREANT

- A. With raised wings
- B. One who divides
- C. To set apart

5. THALASSIAN

- A. Nuptial chamber
- B. Relating to comedy
- C. Marine

6. TRANSENNA

- A. A screen enclosing a shrine
- B. The back of a boat
- C. One who translates

Four W's

1 WHO in 1898 became the first man to sail the world alone?

WHAT is world champion boxer Antonio Tarver nicknamed?

WHERE was Oscar-winning actress Charlize Theron born?

WHEN did the Ireland rugby union centre Mike Gibson make his international debut?

2 WHO wrote the poetry The Talking Horse and the Sad Girl and the Village Under the Sea?

WHAT is the profession of Steve Bell and Posy Simmonds?

WHERE is George Simenon's novel Tropic Moon set?

WHEN did Tanganyika become independent?

3 WHO accompanied James Cracknell in the 2005 Atlantic Rowing Race?

WHAT is the nationality of snooker player Quinten Hann?

WHERE in Africa is the capital city of Kigali?

WHEN did Scottish Claymores win the World Bowl in American Football?

4 WHO wrote the play The Night Of The Iguana?

WHAT trophy is awarded to European Footballer of the Year?

WHERE was the 2008 Rugby League World Cup held?

WHEN did Jeremy Spencer leave the group Fleetwood Mac?

5 WHO choreographed dance show Edward Scissorhands?

WHAT is the capital of Chechnya?

WHERE in Africa are the cities of Tororo and Soroti?

WHEN was the tennis player Tomas Berdych born?

Who am I?

one

An actress, I was born in Iowa in 1921. My last acting role was as a stand-in for Barbara Bel Geddes in Dallas. I had my own sitcom in the 1960s and my films included It's A Wonderful Life and From Here To Eternity, for which I won an Oscar.

two

A newsreader, I was born in Bridgend in 1961. I played an announcer in a recent series of Doctor Who. I regularly present the 10 O'Clock News on BBC1 and the Five O'Clock News on BBC News 24.

three

A singer, I was born in Liverpool in 1983. I was the fiancee of TV presenter Dave Berry. I was part of the original line-up of Atomic Kitten and went on to be a member of the Sugababes.

four

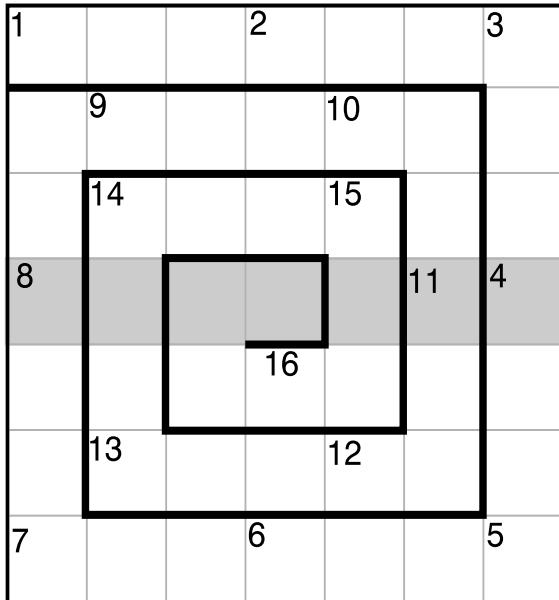
An author, I was born in Nuneaton in 1819. My real name was Mary Anne Evans, and I caused scandal in Victorian society for having a relationship with a married man. My well-known novels include Middlemarch and The Mill On The Floss.

five

A cricketer, I was born in Manchester in 1974. I was awarded the OBE in 2005 and I released the book Calling The Shots. I captained the England cricket team from 2003 to 2008.

Word Spirals

Starting from 1, fill in the grid in a clockwise direction with four-letter words. The last letter of each word becomes the first letter of the next word. If you have correctly filled in the grid there should be a seven-letter key word reading across from 8.



WORDSPIRAL 1

1. Forehead 2. Clean with water 3. Suspend 4. Soft steady light 5. Marries 6. Avoid deliberately 7. Close to 8. Fury 9. Compass point 10. Urban area 11. Tailed amphibian 12. Melt 13. Unwelcome plant 14. Fall in drops 15. Jetty 16. Drive on this.

Key word clue: Place in England

WORDSPIRAL 2

1. Hire cab 2. Notion 3. Partially open 4. American ostrich 5. Elderly 6. Deduct money from 7. Osculate 8. Prophet 9. Fairground entertainment 10. Gaelic 11. Goes wrong 12. Miss out 13. Chessman 14. Religious sisters 15. Halt, pull up 16. Entreaty.

Key word clue: Garment

WORDSPIRAL 3

1. First man 2. Mashed potatoes, informally 3. Comb this 4. Castle in chess 5. Brown seaweed 6. Heap 7. Consumes food 8. Brogue, say 9. Heroic 10. Traffic marker 11. Heinous 12. Luxuriant 13. Exaggerated publicity 14. Facility 15. Resound 16. Cooker.

Key word clue: Surname

WORDSPIRAL 4

1. Unable to hear 2. Beat with a whip 3. Horrific, bloodthirsty 4. Spun thread 5. Require 6. Aquatic bird 7. A tangle 8. Stumble 9. Chrysalis 10. Bushy hairstyle 11. Lubricates 12. Counterfoil 13. Violent robbery 14. Swimming competition 15. Adjoin 16. Plough.

Key word clue: Furniture item

WORDSPIRAL 5

1. Top cards 2. Hotpot 3. Sagacious 4. Revise 5. Carpet nail 6. Leg part 7. Egress 8. End part 9. Fibber 10. Corrosion 11. Sepulchre 12. Plant storage organ 13. Make beer 14. Compass point 15. Petty quarrel 16. A bench.

Key word clue: Insect

Remember When

The following events all occurred in a year in living memory. Can you guess the year?

1 1 Prince Harry was born
2 Carl Lewis won four Olympic gold medals
3 Indira Gandhi was assassinated
4 Dr David Jenkins was consecrated as Bishop of Durham



2 1 The Pope visited the Holy Land
2 Ian Fleming died
3 Spain won the European Football Championships
4 Ian Smith became PM of South Rhodesia



3 1 The international organisation Cominform was set up
2 Stanley Baldwin died
3 Princess Elizabeth married
4 Fresh meat ration was a shilling's worth weekly



4 1 David Steel was elected Liberal Party Leader
2 Lester Piggott won the Derby for a seventh time
3 America celebrated its bicentenary
4 Carry On favourite Sid James died



5 1 James Cagney died
2 Jacques Chirac became prime minister of France
3 Australia became legally independent
4 Mike Tyson became the youngest heavyweight boxing champion at 20



6 1 CND campaigners marched from London
2 Michael Jackson was born
3 Maltese prime minister Don Mintoff resigned
4 The first heart pacemaker was implanted



Sudoku

			6	4	2		5
			9		6	3	7
4				3	2	1	
5			4			3	1
3	7					8	5
8		6			5		2
	1	5				8	
4	8	2				7	

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What's On! Dudley

June is a pearl in the Oyster

June Tabor & Oysterband
Town Hall, Birmingham

IT has been a pretty amazing year for grand dame of folk June Tabor & Oysterband, both weighed down with their trophies from the 2012 Radio2 Folk Awards and their album Ragged Kingdom earning acclaim all over the place.

Oysterband were first on stage led by lead singer John Jones. They laid down the intro for June to quietly walk on stage before moving into Mississippi Summer accompanied by the fiddle and squeezebox.

They then slipped easily into anti-war song Fountains Flowing from their award-winning album. Strangely enough it has the melody of the hymn To Be A Pilgrim but John and June's voices were lifted beautifully by the harmonies of the rest of the band.

The band then pulled out a cover version of the Velvet Underground's All Tomorrow's Parties.

June then made one of her many exits for John to take over with the traditional Molly Bond. The velvet-clad singer was soon back on stage to sing a more upbeat If My Love Loves Me. One of the highlights was the a Capella (When I Was No But) Sweet Sixteen with its magnificent harmonies.

Danny Farragher

The pantomime season is here again... oh yes it is!

THE FESTIVE season is almost upon us and that means pantomime time and a feast of family entertainment at the region's theatres.



Brian Conley and Lesley Joseph star in the Birmingham Hippodrome panto

The second city's big panto is Robinson Crusoe and the Caribbean Pirates (December 15-January 29) with jungle escapee Brian Conley making his sixth panto appearance at the Hippodrome, this time with Birds of a Feather star Lesley Joseph.

Beanstalk

The Grand in Wolverhampton reunites Coronation Street pair Sherrie Hewson and Ken Morley in Jack and the Beanstalk (until January 20), plus Keith Harris with Orville the Duck and Cuddles.

Potteries favourite Jonathan Wilkes is Buttons in Cinderella at The Regent in Stoke (Dec 13-Jan 4).

Other children's shows include Birmingham Rep's Wind in the Willows (until Jan 19) at the Crescent Theatre and James and the Giant Peach (until February 2) at the Old Rep, both Birmingham.

The Royal Shakespeare Company present The Mouse and His Child in Stratford until January 12.

Strictly stars for NIA next month



West End star Denise Van Outen

WITH just a couple of weeks until the Strictly Come Dancing grand final on TV, the celebrities appearing at the NIA in Birmingham as part of the live show have been announced.

West End star Denise Van Outen and former England cricketer Phil Tufnell



GB Olympic gymnast Louis Smith

are the final celebrities added to the tour calling at Birmingham for the weekend of January 18-20.

Judges

They join Tracey Beaker star Dani Harmer, TV presenter Fern Britton,



Popular actress Lisa Riley

actress Lisa Riley, Olympian Louis Smith and former England cricket captain Michael Vaughan. Kate Thornton hosts and the judges will be Craig Revel Horwood, Len Goodman and Bruno Tonioli.

Tickets from £35 to £65 plus fees.

The Docs enjoying 25th year

The Saw Doctors
Wulfrun Hall
Wolverhampton

IT may be a quarter of a century since the Galway Gang hit the music scene but The Saw Doctors show no signs of slowing down or taking things easy if the energy and enthusiasm they brought to Wolves is anything to go by.

Davy Carton, Leo Moran and newest recruit Lindsey Cleary came on to a roaring welcome, opening with World of Good and from then on there was no let up.

They gave the crowd what they wanted and they lapped up numbers such as Tommy K, Will It Never Stop Raining and To Win Just Once.

They played loud and long and gave bigger and better versions of some of their old favourites as they took their fans on a musical journey through their career with Green and Red of Mayo, letting Leo loose on the guitar before the rest of the band got in on the act.

With I'll Be On My Way, I Use a Love Her and Bless Me Father the fans soaked up every note. In the encore the crowd went mental on hearing the opening notes of Joyce Country Ceili Band which led on to the big finish of their unofficial anthem N17 and finally Hay Ride.

Danny Farragher

Sherborne Wharf



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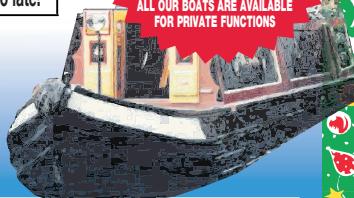
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What's On!

SUNDAY'S TV 16.12.12

CHOICE



Sue Barker

Sports Personality of the Year 2012

BBC1, 7.30pm

The big question in 2012 isn't who will win the BBC Sports Personality of the Year award, but who won't. It's been such an extraordinary period for British sport that there are some massive names who won't even make it to the shortlist. After becoming the first Brit to win a Grand Slam event for decades, not to mention his Olympic medals in the men's singles and mixed doubles, you might expect Andy Murray to be a shoe-in. But he'll face stiff opposition from current favourite, cyclist Bradley Wiggins and Mo Farah.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.40** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. (R) **10.00** Fern Britton Meets David Walliams. (R) **11.00** Sunday Politics: Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.25** Countryfile. (R) **1.20** Bargain Hunt. (R) **2.05** Regional Programme. **3.05** Call the Midwife. (R) **4.05** Lifeline. **4.15** Songs of Praise. **4.55** Nigel Slater's 12 Days of Christmas. (R) **5.25** BBC News: Regional News: Weather. **5.50** Countryfile. **6.50** Strictly Come Dancing: The Results. Tess Daly and Claudia Winkelman announce which two couples will be hanging up their dancing shoes, determining the line-up for next week's final. Katherine Jenkins also performs.

7.30 Sports Personality of the Year 2012. Sue Barker, Gary Lineker and Clare Balding present this year's ceremony from the ExCel in London, where the successor to Mark Cavendish will be crowned from a shortlist of 12.

10.05 BBC News: Regional News: Weather.

10.30 Match of the Day 2. Colin Murray reviews the day's Premier League action, including West Ham v Tottenham, West Ham v White Hart Lane and West Bromwich Albion v West Ham United at the Hawthorns.

11.30 The Graham Norton Show. With Martin Freeman, Dawn French, Emma Thompson, Lee Mack and Girls Aloud.

12.15 Film: Three Fugitives. (1989) **1.50** Weatherview. **1.55** Sign Zone. Film 2012. (R) **2.25** Holby City. (R) **3.25** Great British Food Revival. (R) **4.25** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 CBeebies. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.30** Nigella's Christmas Kitchen. (R) **12.00** Film: Shall We Dance? (1937) **3.35** Animal Park. (R) **4.05** Coast. (R) **5.00** Flog It! (R) **6.00** Cuba with Simon Reeve. The broadcaster heads to the Caribbean to look at the effects of the past two years of economic liberalisation, exploring the impact it has had on Cuban and their society. (R) **7.00** The Great Spanish Crash. Paul Mason travels to Spain to investigate how its once-thriving economy has become the latest casualty of the Eurozone crisis and left the country in need of a bailout.

8.00 Fawlty Towers. Basil decides to enhance the hotel's reputation with an exclusive night of gourmet cuisine. Unfortunately, his new chef is distracted by hapless waiter Manuel. (R)

8.30 Film: Calendar Girls. (2003) **9.00** A Year in the Life of a Yorkshire branch of the Samaritans. Institute cause controversy when they pose nude for a charity calendar. Fact-based comedy, starring Helen Mirren and Julie Walters.

10.15 QI XL. Extended edition.

11.00 Never Mind the Biscuits. Liza Tarbuck hosts, with guests Rita Ora, Labrinth, JLS, Leona Lewis and Jason Manford. (R)

11.30 Film: Surviving Christmas. (2004) Family comedy, starring Ben Affleck.

12.55 Film: Body Heat. (1981) **2.45** BBC News. **4.25** The Super League Show. **5.25** Close.

ITV1

6.00 CITV: Engie Benji. **6.10** Babar and the Adventures of Babou. (R) **6.25** Babar and the Adventures of Babou. **6.45** Masha and the Bear Stories. (R) **7.00** Canimals. (R) **7.05** Fleabag Monkeyface. (R) **7.15** Fleabag Monkeyface. (R) **7.30** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.40** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.50** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **8.00** Big Time Rush. **8.30** The Big Time Rush Ultimate Challenge. **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** There's No Taste Like Home. (R) **10.30** Dinner Date. (R) **11.30** Dickinson's Real Deal. (R) **12.30** ITV News: Weather. **12.35** Film: Carry On, Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus. (R) **2.20** The X Factor Results. (R) **4.20** Regional Programme.

7.00 Happy Birthday E.T. Celebrating the 30th anniversary of E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial, this documentary explores the making of Steven Spielberg's classic film, with contributions by some of the cast.

8.00 The Making of a Lady. A penniless woman marries a lord for money rather than love, but her new life of wealth brings envy and danger. Period drama, starring Lydia Wilson.

9.45 ITV News: Weather.

10.00 Film: I Am Legend. (2007) Sci-fi thriller, starring Will Smith.

11.50 Pensioners Behind Bars. The growing number of over-60s doing time for a criminal offence. (R)

12.40 The Store: ITV News Headlines. **2.40** Motorsport UK. **3.30** ITV Nightstream. **5.30** ITV Morning News.

CHANNEL 4

6.05 Sali Mali. (R) **6.10** The Hoobs. (R) **6.35** The Hoobs. (R) **7.00** The Grid. **7.30** Survival of the Fittest. (R) **8.00** Grace. (R) **8.25** Fraser. (R) **8.55** Fresh. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **11.50** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.45** The Simpsons. (R) **1.15** The Simpsons. (R) **1.45** Deal or No Deal. **2.45** Film: Hocus Pocus. (1993) **4.40** Film: Deck the Halls. (2006) **6.20** Channel 4 News.

6.50 The Price of a Shot. Education minister Elizabeth Truss MP talks about free schools.

6.55 4thought.tv. Members of the public reflect on religious issues.

7.00 Come Dine with Me Christmas Special. Christmas hitmakers Maizie Williams of Boney M and Jon Pertwee are joined by soul singer VV Brown and DJ Toby Anstis for a week of festive dinner parties.

8.00 River Cottage: Three Go Mad at Christmas. Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall is joined by Stephen Mangan, Mark Heap and Kathy Burke for festive cooking on the River Cottage farm.

9.00 Homeland. Carrie begins to suspect there is a mole in the CIA.

10.00 Peep Show. Jeremy moves in with Super Hans.

10.35 Film: I Love You Phillip Morris. (2009) Premiere.

Romantic comedy drama, with Philip Morris and Ewan McGregor.

12.25 8 Out of 10 Cats: Best Bits.

12.55 American Football Live. **4.45** Grudge Match. (R) **4.55** Deal or No Deal. (R) **5.50** Quick Bakes with Eric Lanlard. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! Peppa Pig. **6.05** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **6.15** Fifi and the Flowertots. (R) **6.25** Bert and the Gert. (R) **6.45** The In-Men Show. (R) **6.45** Olive the Ostrich. **6.50** Abby's Flying Fairy School. (R) **7.00** Roobarb and Custard Too. (R) **7.10** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **7.25** Animal Antics. (R) **7.30** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.45** City of Friends. (R) **8.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **8.05** The Adventures of Bottle Top Bill and His Best Friend Corky. (R) **8.25** Angelina Ballerina. **8.40** Rupert Bear. (R) **8.55** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.10** Toby's Travelling Circus. (R) **9.25** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **9.30** Jelly the Pelly. (R) **10.00** Power Rangers: Super Samurai. **10.35** ThunderCats. **11.10** Chinese Food in Minutes. (R) **11.15** Highland Emergency. (R) **11.45** Film: Mr St Nick. (2002) **1.30** Film: Battle of the Bulge. (R) **3.15** Film: I'll Fly for You. **4.00** Film: Christmas. (2006) **5.00** Film: The Da Vinci Code. (2006) **7.55** News Weekend.

8.00 Film: Click. (2006) A man gets his hands on a remote control that allows him to fast-forward through the dull parts of his life. Comedy, starring Adam Sandler.

10.00 Film: Zack and Miri Make a Porno. (2009) Two friends plan to shoot a porno film, but find having sex for the cameras makes them rethink their feelings for each other. Comedy, with Seth Rogen and Elizabeth Banks.

11.55 World's Craziest Police Pursuits 2. (R)

12.55 Star Casino. **4.00** House Doctor. (R) **4.15** Rough Guide to Cities. (R) **5.05** Han's Helpline. (R) **5.15** The Milkshake Show. (R) **5.40** Thomas & Friends. (R) **5.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **11.40** Slither. (2006)

DIGITAL

BBC Three

7.00 Merlin. **7.50** Film: The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. (2005) **10.00** Him & Her. **10.30** Family Guy. **11.15** American Dad!

BBC Four

7.00 The Roasts of Christmas Past. **8.00** A Very English Winter. The Unthanks. **9.00** Chas & Dave: Last Orders. **10.00** Storyville: The Other Irish Travellers. **11.00** Film: The Hunter. (2010)

ITV2

3.35 Take Me Out Celebrity Christmas Special. **4.50** Take Me Out: The Gossip Celebrity Christmas Special. **5.35** Film: The Christmas Star. (2012) **6.00** The Extra Factor: Winner's Story 2012. **9.00** Film: Gladiator. (2000)

ITV3

3.40 Agatha Christie's Poirot. **5.55** Lewis. **7.55** Film: HouseSitter. (1991) **10.00** A is for Acid. The story of killer John George Haigh, starring Martin Clunes.

ITV4

2.05 Film: Support Your Local Gunfighter. (1971) **4.00** Film: Weekend at Bernie's. (1989) **6.00** Film: What's the Clue? (1988) **8.15** Film: Jackie Chan's First Strike. (1996) **10.00** Film: Enter the Dragon. (1973)

E4

3.40 The Big Bang Theory. **8.00** Film: Just My Luck. (2006) **10.00** Misfits. **11.00** The Inbetweeners

Film4

2.45 The Belles of St Trinian's. (1954) **4.35** The Jumper. (2008) **6.00** Film: Moonlight. (2009) **7.15** Jumper. (2008) A man with the ability to teleport is hunted by a secret religious society determined to wipe out all of his kind. Fantasy thriller, with Hayden Christensen. **9.00** Die Hard. (1988) **11.40** Slither. (2006)

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What's On!

Film Choices

MONDAY

I Now Pronounce You Chuck & Larry, ITV1, 10.35pm A fireman asks a male colleague to pretend to marry him to get round a hitch with his late wife's life insurance policy. Their plan is thrown off course when an overzealous city official begins to doubt the pair's relationship is genuine, and decides to conduct an investigation. Comedy, starring Adam Sandler, Kevin James, Steve Buscemi, Jessica Biel, Dan Aykroyd, Ying Rhames, Nicholas Turturro and Richard Chamberlain. (2007)

TUESDAY

The Unbearable Lightness of Being, BBC1, 11.35pm A successful surgeon leads a carefree life in 1960s Czechoslovakia, and pursues complicated romances with two women – a Bohemian artist and a bookish small-town woman. Their lives are thrown into chaos when the country faces invasion by Society forces. Drama based on Milan Kundera's novel, starring Daniel Day-Lewis, Juliette Binoche, Lena Olin, Derek de Lint, Erland Josephson, Pavol Landovsky, Stellan Skarsgard, Pascale Kalensky. (1988)

WEDNESDAY

The Santa Suit, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A greedy executive hires men dressed as Santa Claus to sell his company's merchandise, but the real Father Christmas takes exception to being exploited and casts a spell that turns the businessman into one of the impersonators. As he plays the part of Santa, he acquires some much-needed festive spirit. Comedy, starring Kevin Sorbo and Jodie Dowdall. (2010)



Last Chance Harvey, Thursday, BBC2, 9pm

THURSDAY

Last Chance Harvey, BBC2, 9pm

A miserable New Yorker travels to London for his estranged daughter's wedding, but is devastated to find his ex-wife's new husband is to give the bride away instead of him. While trying to return home, he bumps into a woman feeling equally unfulfilled in her life, and their fledgling romance inspires them both to face up to their problems. Romantic drama, with Dustin Hoffman, Emma Thompson, Eileen Atkins, Kathy Baker, Liane Balaban, James Brolin, Richard Schiff, Wendy Mae Brown. (2008)

FRIDAY

Mistletoe Over Manhattan, Channel 5, 3.10pm Santa Claus' wife goes to New York to perform a Christmas miracle and give her husband fresh inspiration. She befriends a cop who is in the midst of a divorce and offers to become a nanny to his children. She then discovers he still loves his wife, and tries to find a way to bring them back together. Christmas fantasy, starring Tricia Helfer and Greg Bryk. (2011)

Pick of the Week

Our sporting heroes get their just rewards

Whenever the show is broadcast, fans know that Christmas is just around the corner – and who will be celebrating the festive season with a shiny new trophy on the mantelpiece as well as a turkey in the oven?

The big question this year, of course, is: who will win the main prize, but who won?

It's been such an extraordinary year for sport that there will be some massive names who won't even make it to the shortlist when, in other years, they might have been expected to walk away with the trophy.

For a start, Olympic gold medalists Charlotte Dujardin, Greg Rutherford, Victoria Pendleton, Laura Trott and Alistair Brownlee, and Europe's Ryder Cup hero Ian Poulter, have not made the final 12.

After becoming the first Brit to win a Grand Slam event for decades, not to mention his Olympic medals in the men's singles and mixed doubles, you might expect Andy Murray to be a shoe-in.

But then there's Bradley Wiggins to consider. He's not only our first-ever

winner of the Tour de France, he also won gold at the Games and is the current favourite to triumph again here.

Athletes Mo Farah and Jessica Ennis are also in the running (no pun intended), while Ben Ainslie's achievement in becoming the Olympics' most decorated sailor is recognised.

Also making the shortlist are rower Katherine Grainger, boxer Nicola Adams, Wiggins' cycling team mate Chris Hoy, golfer Rory McIlroy and Paralympians David Weir, Ellie Simmonds and Sarah Storey.

At least last year's accusations of sexism, which came after no women made the shortlist, can't be levelled at the Beeb this time.

Not only are there lots of females in the running for the main prize, how the nominees are decided has been changed too.

This time, a panel comprised of various BBC executives and presenters, newspaper sports editors, former nominees (this year's are Steve Redgrave, Tanni Grey-Thompson and Denise Lewis) and Sue Campbell, chair of UK Sport, has

been put together to come up with 12 worthy names.

The panel will also choose the 1st, 2nd and 3rd places for the Team of the Year, Overseas Personality of the Year and Coach of the Year awards. Other awards on the night will again be Young Sports Personality of the Year, Sports Hero, which will continue to be decided by the existing specialist panel system and the Lifetime Achievement and Helen Rollason Awards, which will be decided by the Board of BBC Sport.

Barbara Slater, director BBC sport, says: "This year's sports personality of the year will be a celebration of what has been a truly unique year for sport in the UK. We are incredibly proud to be hosting the sporting grand finale for such a remarkable year."

Sue Barker, Gary Lineker and Clare Balding (whose own star rose thanks to her outstanding presenting skills during the BBC's coverage of the Olympics and Channel 4's hosting of the Paralympics) are the hosts.

And no matter what happens, next year's event is going to have a lot to live up to.



Sports Personality of the Year 2012, Sunday, BBC1, 7.30pm

Best of the Rest

Monday

Britain's Secret Terror Squad: Panorama BBC1, 9pm

It seems that these days, there's nary a day goes by without some thrilling drama or other focusing on the cloak-and-dagger lives of people within the shady world of counter-terrorism. But just how grounded in reality are they? The answer is, generally, not very – yet 40 years ago, a unit existed which is far stranger than fiction, and ten times as shocking. For two years in the early 1970s, the British Army ran an undercover squad that operated outside the law, with orders to shoot terrorists on sight. They believe it saved lives, but in this documentary, reporter John Ware uncovers evidence that the unit may also have killed innocent civilians.

Bad Santas

Channel 4, 9pm

If you thought that all it took to be a Santa was a red suit and a beard, this two-part documentary should make you think again. It follows a group of unemployed men in their fifties, who are looking to make a fresh start by enrolling in one of the UK's most successful Santa schools (yes, apparently there is more than one.) Under the watchful eye of James Lovell, Managing Director of the intriguingly named Ministry of Fun, the men will have to pass a series of challenges, but how many of the Santa students will graduate to a grotto of their own?

Tuesday

Inside Guinness World Records ITV1, 8pm

It's 40 years since the much-missed Roy Castle

first presented Record Breakers, the BBC TV kids' show which captured the imaginations of millions. Whether it was the sight of him and a few dozen extras tap-dancing around the courtyard to BBC TV centre while Norris McWhirter looked on, or his reports on world records, for two decades Roy piqued the interest of many, and also helped boost sales of The Guinness Book of Records. Now the conclusion of this documentary provides a close access perspective on what drives the extraordinary and colourful characters that hold World Records. They include Wilma Conner, the oldest competitive female bodybuilder, and Tom Luckey, the oldest aerobatic wing walker.

Wednesday

The Christmas No 1 Story BBC2, 9pm

In Britain, predicting what will be at the top of the charts on December 25 has become a festive tradition in there with trimming the tree, singing carols and moaning about how early the supermarkets start hawking their seasonal wares. But just why has that number one slot become so important, and what do the chart-toppers of Christmas past tell us about the tastes of the Great British record-buying public? That's what this documentary aims to find out, as it traces the story of the Christmas number one, from Harry Belafonte, to last year's single by the Military Wives, taking in everyone from the Beatles to Benny Hill along the way.

The Twins Who Share a Body

Channel 4, 10pm

Indian twins Sohna and Mohna are two of the world's most incredible children – but their story isn't an easy one to hear. They're celebrating their ninth birthday, however that in itself is an amazing achievement, as the siblings share just one body. Their condition (known as dicephalic parapagus conjoined twins) affects only one in a million, and so this documentary questions just how they manage to live a fulfilled life when they are two conscious beings in one body. Meanwhile, doctors desperately try to find out whether the twins will always be just one body, or if it would be possible for them to be separated and one life sacrificed.

Thursday

Young Apprentice BBC1, 8pm

It's been eight weeks since the latest batch of budding business brains first set foot in Alan Sugar's legendary boardroom, and every challenge they have undertaken has been building up to this point. The hopefuls have been dropping like flies, and after last week's double-firing, which followed a festival-based task in which the two teams of three were challenged to flog products at

Text Santa, Friday, ITV1, 8pm



Tuesday

Inside Guinness World Records

ITV1, 8pm

It's 40 years since the much-missed Roy Castle

ZUMBA with Suzanne

Launching January new and exciting diet and fitness programme

MONDAY

Pilates 9.45am-10.45am
Zumba 6.00pm-7.00pm
Booiaka 7.15pm-8.15pm
Zumba 6.30pm-7.30pm
Toning 7.45pm-8.30pm

TUESDAY

Zumba 5.45pm-6.45pm
Zumba 9.45am-10.45am
Bokwa 6.30pm-7.30pm
Zumba 8.00pm-9.00pm
Zumba 6.30pm-7.30pm
Zumba 7.45pm-8.45pm
Zumba 6.30pm-7.30pm
Pilates 7.30pm-8.30pm

WEDNESDAY

Zumba 9.45am-10.45am
Zumba 6.30pm-7.30pm
Zumba 6.30pm-7.30pm
Zumba 7.45pm-8.45pm
Zumba 6.30pm-7.30pm
Ripped Toned Seats 6.30pm-7.30pm

THURSDAY

Leisurelee Fitness 7.45pm-8.30pm
Bokwa 6.30pm-7.30pm
Lanesfield 7.45pm-8.30pm
Wordsley 7.45pm-8.30pm
Wordsley 7.45pm-8.30pm

FRIDAY

Zumba 10.15am-11.00am
Zumba 6.30pm-7.30pm
Zumba 6.30pm-7.30pm

SATURDAY

Zumba 11.15am-12.00pm
Zumba 9.30am-10.30am
Zumbatronics 9.30am Lit Starz (4-7) & 10.15 Big Starz (8-12)

SUNDAY

Zumba 9.45am-10.45am
Bokwa 11.15am-12.00pm

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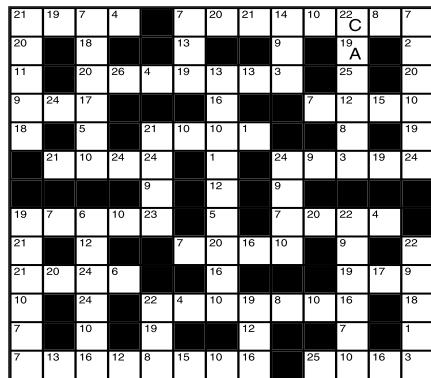
What's On!

Brain Gym

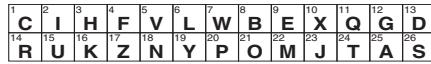
No.199

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:



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Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

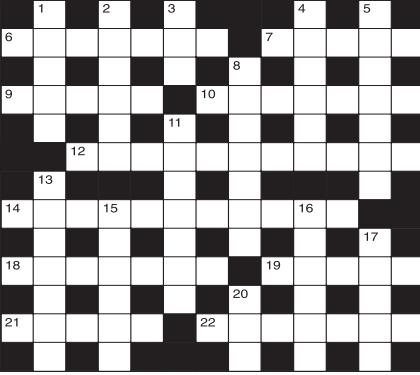
Cryptic Clues:

Across

6. Sea mail going astray causes uneasiness (7)
7. Possibly loves to work out crossword clues (5)
9. Agencies that inform me before help is returned (5)
10. Possibly train as a mechanic (7)
12. Hostility to dogs, for example? (3,8)
14. A procession of empty protest (6,5)
18. Is the parson shortly back on form? (7)
19. An all-round measure (5)
21. It gets wetter as it dries (5)
22. Have a flying start? (4,3)

Down

1. It goes on record (5)
2. Figure a girl is showing ill-will (6)
3. Finally refuse customer (3)
4. If run down they will pick you up (6)
5. A flighty individual (7)
8. He's at liberty to be a privileged citizen (7)
11. Continue to flirt? (5,2)
13. Seasonal blazer (4-3)
15. Inquire inside to obtain an engine part (6)
16. The number increases in emergencies (6)
17. People in office? (5)
20. Don't allow a section to be played (3)



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Clothes-mad; 7 Ozone; 8 Swallow; 10 Cremated; 11 Evil; 13 Shrimp; 15 Scarab; 17 Nick; 18 Research; 21 Several; 22 Mason; 23 Archimedes; Down: 1 Close; 2 Open arms; 3 Haste; 4 Star; 5 All over; 6 Torch songs; 9 Well behind; 12 Screamed; 14 Recover; 16 Bedlam; 19 Rests; 20 Arch. QUICK - Across: 1 Out-of-doors; 7 Alder; 8 Mastiff; 10 Farewell; 11 Envoy; 13 Throng; 15 Redden; 17 Hold; 18 Catacomb; 21 Diploma; 22 Arena; 23 Department. Down: 1 Order; 2 Throwing; 3 Female; 4 Oust; 5 Reigned; 6 Far-fetched; 9 Flying-boat; 12 Separate; 14 Relapse; 16 Vacant; 19 Overt; 20 Solo.

Quick Clues:

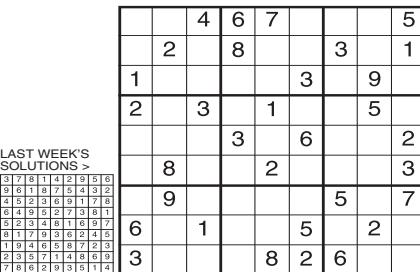
Across

6. Conveyance (7)
7. Extreme (5)
9. Blemish (5)
10. Liberate (7)
12. Swindle (11)
14. Coiffeur (11)
18. Excursionist (7)
19. Spurious (5)
21. Deficient (5)
22. Get (7)

Down

1. Kingly (5)
2. Victor (6)
3. Former (3)
4. Contend (6)
5. Entreat (7)
8. Petition (7)
11. Fall out (7)
13. Vagary (7)
15. Fret (6)
16. Departure (6)
17. Haste (5)
20. Deed (3)

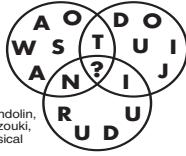
Sudoku



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >
3 1 7 6 1 1 4 2 3 5 6
9 6 1 8 7 5 4 9 2
4 5 2 3 6 9 1 7 8
6 4 9 5 2 7 3 9 1
1 3 8 7 5 9 6 2 4
2 9 4 6 5 8 7 2 3
8 1 1 7 9 3 6 2 4 5
1 9 4 6 5 8 7 2 3
2 3 5 7 1 4 8 6 9
7 8 6 2 9 3 5 1 4

Circlegram

Replace the question mark with a letter so that the letters within each circle can be arranged to form words on a common theme. What are the three words, and the letter represented by the question mark?



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:
The letter represented by the question mark is O. Mandolin, trombone, bouzouki, all types of musical instrument.

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Direct from the West End and starring Jason Donovan, the feel-good international hit sensation Priscilla Queen of the Desert is coming to Manchester for two weeks only! Winner of 4 What's On Stage.com awards, including Best New Musical, and based on the smash-hit movie, Priscilla is the heartwarming, uplifting adventure of three friends who hop aboard a battered old bus searching for love and friendship and end up finding more than they had ever dreamed of. Jason Donovan stars as Tick, the role he originated in the West End.

With a dazzling array of outrageous Olivier and Tony award-winning costumes and a hit parade of dancefloor favourites including It's Raining Men, I Will Survive, Hot Stuff, Finally, Boogie Wonderland, Go West, Girls Just Wanna Have Fun, and I Love The Nightlife, this wildy fresh and funny musical is a journey to the heart of fabulous!

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Home with open view

ENJOYING open views on to Kingswinford's King George Park, this extended traditional semi-detached house is for sale priced at £174,950.

The property in Water Street is described as generously proportioned and beautifully appointed, with four good sized bedrooms including a master bedroom loft conversion with en suite shower room.

Water street forms part of an established and sought after location which is close to the heart of Kingswinford and its excellent range of amenities including shops, restaurants, schooling and regular public transport services.

On the ground floor the re-fitted dining kitchen, 17ft 3in by 12ft 2in, comprises two areas, the dining area being 12ft 3in by 10ft 9in and the kitchen - 8ft 9in by 6ft 6in - fitted with a range of units with roll edge work surfaces, stainless steel sink/drainer with mixer tap, plumbing for automatic washing machine, integrated freezer, four ring gas hob with cooker hood above, double oven and fridge.

The lounge, 12ft 10in by 10ft 11in, has a living flame gas fire with period



Taylors is handling the sale of this semi-detached in Water Street, on at £174,950

style feature fireplace surround with white suite of bath with shower and screen, vanity unit with inset wash basin and WC.

On the first floor are three bedrooms and a re-fitted bathroom with classic white suite of bath with shower and screen, vanity unit with inset wash basin and WC.

On the second floor the master bedroom, 19ft by 12ft 2in, has fitted wardrobes and a white en-suite with

corner shower cubicle. Pedestal wash basin and WC.

Outside the house is set back beyond a block paved driveway providing of road parking, while the rear garden has a paved patio with steps down to a timber shed, children's playhouse, lawn with border, further timber shed and paved/wood chipped areas.

Contact estate agent Taylors on 01384 401777.

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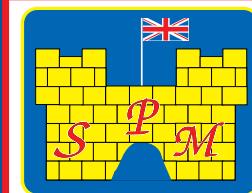
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Your essential guide to the world of motoring compiled by Motoring Editor Sharon Walters

Improved airflow benefits Auris

LOOK underneath the new Toyota Auris and you'll discover shallow fins on several of the body panels. Hardly something an owner is likely ever to see, but they're there for a purpose.

They help smooth the airflow beneath the car, and that makes it easier to push through the air. Which saves precious petrol and makes the car less expensive to run.

It shows an impressive attention to detail and augurs well for a car that arrives in a part of the market already rich in quality, with names like Golf and Focus to contend with.

Toyota knows the Auris will battle it out in exalted company, where a merely sensible car is no longer good enough. Toyota spent decades building those, but now think a new model "should bring a smile to the face of an owner".

If Toyota succeeds there are going to be a whole lot of smiling Europeans; the plant near Derby will soon be turning out a Euro Auris every 66 seconds. Which ought to make the Toyota accountants smile, at the very least.

By Ian Donaldson

Sales of 15,000 cars are anticipated across Europe next year, helped by a estate joining the current five-door hatch in July. There is the usual Toyota choice of petrol and diesel engines and a petrol/electric hybrid, the latter expected to take four in every 10 sales.

Prices in the UK start at £14,495 for an Active version and top out with the posh and well equipped Auris Excel Hybrid at £21,745. As well as being cheaper in some versions than before, this new Auris is lower, sleeker and more economical.

Improving

But simply improving on what went before is not good enough these days, with some of the best cars for the real world available around the same price.

A stand out car has got to "be a car for the heart". Those are Toyota's words and first impressions, while hardly setting the old ticker racing, are favourable. There's a new found elegance and carefully chiselled look about the newcomer, with a bold new face

that will become the look of Toyotas of the future.

Inside, especially on the top Excel model tested here, there's real attempt at adding class, with smartly stitched leather on the dash and an emphasis on quality that stretches to ensuring everything you can read, from dashboard to audio controls on the steering wheel uses the same typeface. Attention to detail, again.

Changes to the suspension across the range are aimed at softening the ride without compromising cornering power, while moving the heavy Hybrid's battery to beneath the rear seats means extra room in the boot.

It helps push the car's weight closer to the road, as does lowering the roof line and dropping the seats; good for road holding but less good for the creaky hipped buyers that you might expect to take an important slice of Auris ownership.

Owners of all ages won't complain at a car that managed 50mpg on a series of Portuguese motorways (sometimes, ahem, at rather more than the UK speed limit) and demanding hill roads. Yes, a good diesel (the Auris offers a diesel but there wasn't one to try) would do as well, or better, but would



Shallow fins beneath the body panels are designed to ease the airflow, which makes for a more economic drive

not drive the same. The hybrid Auris produces a combined 134bhp from its petrol and electric power sources, enough for 112mph flat out and a 10.9 second dash to 62mph. There's no road tax to pay and it makes a tax efficient company car. Toyota expects to sell five million petrol/electric cars worldwide in 2013 and plans to introduce 21 new hybrids

A petrol only Auris tried later was a more enthusiastic drive.

Advertisement Feature

Local Vauxhall Dealer Celebrates Sales Success

Dudley Motor Company are celebrating their latest unprecedented sales success at their recent Vauxhall VIP BIG Event, when during the weekend of 16th to 19th November, the company sold 60 vehicles of which a staggering 48 were NEW CARS!

These figures ensured that Dudley Motor Company were one of THE Top Selling Vauxhall Dealerships in the country for this nationwide event. This is backed up by their consistent record of achievement, in 2011 this company were winners of the Vauxhall Chairman's Award for Excellence whilst they have a string of Regional Excellence awards lining their walls that stretches back every year to 2006.

General Manager Rob Gilbert commented that success is a testament to the high standards of customer care that are required by Vauxhall of their dealerships, which consistently result



in the company achieving high scores on customer surveys. This family run business of nearly 60 years is justifiably proud of these excellent standards in customer satisfaction, where personal service counts.

Rob Gilbert himself has worked for Vauxhall in Dudley for over 29 years whilst amongst this family run firms other loyal staff, Motability specialist, Tony Lister has over 50 years Vauxhall experience and Trevor Hollies in sales has over 34 years Vauxhall experience!

Dudley Motor Company now have over 50 part exchanges arriving within the next few weeks and we will be offering many of our cars at around cost price or below, so we can reduce our stocks down to a more manageable level.

During December and January, we will therefore be offering many one owner, low mileage part exchanges that will be priced TO GO! All cars will still benefit from the backing of this quality dealership for peace of mind. Supermarket Prices with Guaranteed Quality! Rob Gilbert and his staff would like to wish all Dudley Motor Company friends and customers, a Very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.



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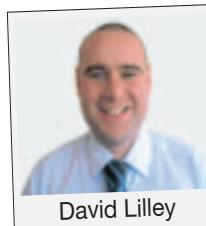


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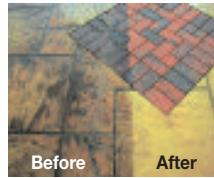
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Lockmen run halted as Rangers score four

Black Country Rangers 4

Willesden Town 1

HIGH-FLYING Black Country Rangers halted Willenhall Town's winning run of five games in the West Midlands Premier.

Rangers' victory means they lead the division by four points, although second-placed Lye have two matches in hand.

The dangerous James McKenzie caused problems for the Rangers back four early on and was brought down in the box by keeper Luke Tilt.

He was sent off and Craig Oldfield fired in from the spot. The Lockmen were on top at this stage and could have increased their lead.

McKenzie was denied a second penalty as he appeared to be fouled in the box but the first half ended with the home side's Liam Hughes skipping past the defence before firing wide.

Willenhall failed to cash in on their extra man advantage in the second half as they regularly gave the ball away.

Rangers regrouped and the game turned when Callum Haynes, who had handled Hughes well, limped off.

Hughes smashed in a hat-trick in 10 minutes. Rangers added a fourth from David Meese.

Kyle strikes to surprise high-flyers

Loughborough University 0

Tividale 1

KYLE BRADY hit the only goal in Tividale's Midland Alliance win at high-flying Loughborough University, writes Gez Mulholland.

His eighth league goal of the season made it four wins on the bounce for Tividale.

Boss Dean Whitehouse fielded the same side that beat Heath Hayes 5-3 the previous Saturday.

Tividale caused Loughborough first half problems but the hosts came out with attacking intent at the start of the second half.

Kyle Hill hit a low cross for Brady to tap in. Brady said: "It's always nice to score, but for me, the biggest thing is getting the three points and the win for the team."

He added: "Staying undefeated from now until the New Year is key for us."

Bala hat-trick helps Town to big victory

Bartley Green 1 Dudley Town 5

DUDLEY TOWN cruised to their biggest away victory since March 2010 as a Bala hat-trick inspired a 5-1 win.

The Robins made two changes to the side that beat Pegasus Juniors 4-0 three weeks ago in a last outing before a weather-enforced hiatus.

The suspended Chris Whitaker and Liam Morris made way for Steve Edmunds and Bala respectively as centre-back Rob Whitley remained on the suspended list allowing Alex Perry to continue at the heart of defence.

The departure of Rion Francis-Mills allowed for returns for

Richard Langford and Anthony Cox on the bench. Despite their overall dominance Town were a goal down with seven minutes of the West Midlands Premier game played.

A knock-on by Bartley Green's Courtney Charles found former Leamington and Chasetown forward Dean Perrow who scored.

On eight minutes Dudley were unlucky not to level as a fierce Geoff Hill shot was cleared off the line but two minutes later a cross from Hill found Bala who headed

in from close range. With Ross Love and Perry keeping Perrow and Charles quiet, Dudley pushed forward.

On 25 minutes a neat chip by Ben Stretton found Bala for his second. Both sides pushed forward in the closing stages of the half with Perrow's powerful shot confidently handled by former Bradford City shot-stopper Aaron O'Malley.

Dudley kept up pressure in the second half in search of a third goal to kill off their opponents.

They were denied by Aaron

Gayle and a back-heal by Bala rolled along the goal line. Just as they thought their breakthrough was coming they got a scare as Perrow found his way into the box on 64 minutes. His firm low shot was well handled by O'Malley to keep the Robins ahead.

Town did eventually find a third goal on 71 minutes.

A fine cross from the right flank from Grant Joshua found captain Danny Ludlow who powered a header past Gayle.

From then on it was all Dudley and 10 minutes later they made it 4-1. An error from Gayle in hastily

taking a free-kick played in Bala, who lobbed the ball into the net to notch his first hat-trick of the season.

It was then 5-1 on 83 minutes. This time Hill was getting in on the act with a thunderous shot from outside the area that left Gayle with no chance. This was a good way to cap off a fine performance.

Bartley Green: Gayle, Crawford (Collingwood), Butler, Knight, Morris, Thomas, Pickett, Whitehouse, Charles, Perrow, Bailey (Reid). **Sub not used:** Butler.

Dudley Town: Tom O'Malley, Edmunds, Watkins, Lee (Gardiner), Potts, Stretton, Joshua (Cox), McGilligan, Hill (Moms), Bala, Ludlow. **Subs not used:** Langford, Taylor.

Referee: A Hill

Athletic's first time in last 32 is secured

Gornal Athletic 1 Boston Tn 0

GORNAL ATHLETIC made history by marching into the fourth round of the FA Vase.

Matt Weyman's eighth-minute goal was enough to secure a first-ever place in the last 32 for the Midland Alliance outfit as they claimed victory at Garden Walk.

The hosts could have been two goals ahead in the first five minutes. Chances fell to Ricky Nicholls, whose shot flew just wide, and Weyman, whose effort hit the post.

The crucial goal came when Chris Rabone's high ball into the box was spilled by Boston keeper Doug Linberg and Weyman stroked the loose ball into the far corner of the net.

Boston began to edge their way back into the game, but found it hard to find a way through a well-marshalled Gornal defence.

Once into danger territory, they ran into in-form keeper Matt Martin.

Each side created several chances in the second half, without adding to the score-line.

So it's Gornal who go through to a fourth-round home tie against Wisbech Town.

United seen off by Vase enthusiasts

Whitley Bay 6 Causeway Utd 0

THIS was one step too far for Causeway as they went out of the Vase to four-time winners Whitley Bay.

They went behind on six minutes as Bradley Brook scored the first of his three.

It was 2-0 on 15 minutes as Bay top scorer Paul Chow scored the first of his three. On 24 minutes Paul Robinson scored and could have had a first-half hat-trick. The fourth goal didn't come until 59 minutes as Ashley Davis broke and fed Chow to score. Robinson crossed for Chow's treble on 62 minutes and Lee Kerr converted a cross from Chris Fawcett on 78 minutes.

■ AFC Wulfruniens were third-round casualties as they lost 3-2 in extra-time at home to East Midlands League Borrowash Victoria.

Mike Robertson and Tom Piggott twice hit equalisers to force extra time but Callum Thompson struck the winner in the fourth minute of the added period.

Remarkable comeback win by DK's 14 heroes

FOURTEEN-MAN Dudley Kingswinford hit back from 17 points adrift to pull off a remarkable National Division Two North victory.

They trailed 27-10 to Luctonians and on 55 minutes lost flanker Tom Leach to a second yellow card in what the home team claimed was a case of mistaken identity.

But, against all the odds, the 14 men dominated and not only overhauled the deficit but scored a winning try in the most amazing turnaround seen at Heathbrook for years. Both sides looked to throw the ball wide and Lucs' big pack gave DK a tough time in the set scrums, but DK were more lively in the loose, especially late on as Lucs' big forwards tired.

DK changed a side beaten at Bromsgrove a fortnight ago. Joe Carpenter returned to the back row in place of injured Jon Tideswell, Chris Perry replaced Jimmy Gore in the centre and Dan Richards started at loose head. Dan Shakespeare was on the bench.

Though outgunned in set pieces, DK's pack was excellent in the loose with Luke Greenwood outstanding.

Matt Farrington made sharp, penetrating bursts but DK man of the match was centre Stefan Shillingford with a hat-trick of tries.

His third, on 70 minutes, after an 80m break from defence, knocked the stuffing out of a shell-shocked Lucs defence and levelled.

Penalty

Duncan Chance administered the coup de grace three minutes later.

DK were 3-0 up after five minutes with a Gareth Bowes penalty. Lucs fly-half Jake Newman levelled three minutes later.

DK were 3-0 up after five minutes with a Gareth Bowes penalty. Lucs fly-half Jake Newman levelled three minutes later.

DK got another kickable penalty after 11 minutes but it was reversed after foul play from Tom Leach and the flanker got a yellow card.

Already under pressure in the set, losing a man soon cost DK as Lucs scored a try from a strong rolling maul when flanker Chris Harris was driven over after 17

minutes. Jake Newman's conversion made it 10-3.

Lucs made the most of their numbers with another Harris try to lead 15-3.

Back to 15 men, DK got a try after 26 minutes as Lucs lost possession at a lineout in their 22m area.

Greenwood set up a ruck and the ball was transferred to Shillingford who stepped inside a couple of players to score. Bowes' conversion cut the gap to five points.

Lucs' prop Anthony Marfell was yellow-carded on 32 minutes to signal an all-out DK assault.

Farrington took a high ball on his 10m line, kicked ahead and gathered, narrowly failing to switch possession to an onrushing forward with a clear run.

Before the break a DK three-quarter move saw Chance bundled into touch on the Lucs line.

DK's failure to get more points when Lucs were down to 14 looked costly as the visitors scored two early tries.

Right-wing Drew

Cheshire beat Chance's tackle attempt to score and Jake Newman converted.

Left-winger Alex Rumsey stepped inside Donavon Smile and raced 30m to the line to put Lucs 27-10 ahead.

DK moved the ball left and right, leaving Shillingford enough room and momentum to stretch over in the corner. A magnificent touchline conversion from Bowes took DK to within 10 points.

After Leach's dismissal, Bowes stroked over in the 65th-minute before a stunning try changed the game.

DK's pack, trying to hang onto their own scrum ball inside the home 22m area, were being shoved backwards but Pete Knight got the ball and it was flicked out to Shillingford.

His half-jink, half-dummy saw him, from a standing start, powerfully 80m to the line. Bowes converted to level the scores.

A DK move through several pairs of hands saw Chance score the winning points.



He's off! Stefan Shillingford on his way to scoring a dramatic 80m try for DK

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SPORT

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New man
Dan stars
for Town
terrific 10

Boldmere St Michaels 1

Tipton Town 2

TIPTON'S best Midland Alliance performance of the season saw new man Dan Dubitat steal the show for 10-man Town.

Town bossed the game for lengthy periods despite defender Jake Foster going off in the 21st minute for bringing down Michael Woolman.

Kirk Smith's curler from the free-kick was saved by Tipton keeper Chris Collins.

After Karl Edwards fired just over for Town, Boldmere responded with a volley by Andy Lewis just off-target.

Edwards hit the bar and Collins saved well in the 32nd minute, this time from Stuart Capaldi.

Dubitat forced home keeper Lewis Penney to turn his effort aside for a corner from which he skinned the bar with a forceful header.

In the 51st minute he drove the ball home after being set up by Matt Martin.

Three minutes later Tipton's Edwards beat a poor offside trap, before driving narrowly wide.

Dominated

Tipton had dominated for some time, helped by the jeers of home fans.

In the 62nd minute Dubitat got a second but Woolman pulled one back minutes later to make a game of it for the Mikes.

Keeper Collins helped preserve a fragile lead at the foot of the onrushing Woolman with minutes left.

Mitch Plows, who had battled with the other nine Tipton players still contesting the issue, plotted a neat ball into the path of Martin.

Though the wide-man drove accurately and firmly, Boldmere keeper Penney made a fine save.

Dubitat was recruited after striker Mike Penney cracked a rib in Town's midweek match at Causeway United.

Top division Vale surprised by Lions

Rugeley Rangers Lions U9 2

Castle Vale JKS U9 1

THIRD division Lions sprung a cup surprise in beating first division Vale.

It was an entertaining affair packed with end to end attacking play.

Vale took a deserved lead but the Lions, well-managed in defence and midfield by Callum Corrigan, hit back with a solo effort from Billy Mackenzie.

A fine strike by Jake Poole proved to be the winner.

Chance to hear of new signing and meet team

HEATHENS fans can mix with the team at the club's Christmas party next week.

All five confirmed signings for the 2013 season will attend – and the sixth will be introduced live on stage.

The event is at Cradley Heath Liberal Club, High Street, Cradley Heath on Friday, December 21.

More than half the capacity has been sold already and the club will also reveal the new 2013 race jacket. A one-off jacket has been produced for the night which will be signed and auctioned.

Chairman Nigel Pearson said of the club's fans: "We want to give them a Christmas

Dudley Heathens

present by introducing another brand new signing for the club. I'm sure the Liberal Club will be packed solid for what should be a great night and a good way for all the Heathens to start Christmas.

"The response to our signings so far has been very positive and this has been a very difficult winter for the management.

"My partners and I agonised over the team building but we knew we had an impossible choice to make and we have had to tear apart a fabulous bunch of riders."

No fewer than three of the 2012 team

have now been snapped up by the Isle of Wight. I'd like to wish Tom Perry, Byron Bekker and Darryl Ritchings all the very best at the Isle of Wight and I'm sure our meetings against them next season will be interesting," added Pearson.

"They are all great lads and have been a delight to have in the Heathens fold. I sincerely hope they will be back in the future.

"I'd also like to wish James White-Williams all the best in whatever he decides to do next and I'm looking forward to Adam Royton's Benefit Night at the River Rooms in Stourbridge on January 22. That will be a great night."

"But the Christmas party is up next and I know how much our new signing is looking forward to coming along and meeting the fans. It should be a great night."

"And we're also excited about our new race jacket. We've had one made up just for the night which will be up for auction."

Tickets are available for the event at the club's online shop via the official club website www.dudleyheathens.co or by calling Heathens Speedway Supporters Club, who are hosting the evening alongside the club, on 07766 745681. Tickets are £6 HSSC members and £8 non-members.

Youthful rivals are challenge for Sports

Wednesfield 0 Dudley Sports 3
SPORTS claimed another three West Midlands Premier points with a hard-fought victory.

Home keeper Sam Arnold was kept busy, twice saving to deny Matt Hearsey, and the early action was fairly even.

Dudley led as Hearsey was ruled to have been tripped by Thomas Horton. The striker's penalty was a good shot to the left of the keeper.

The hosts fell further behind at the start of the second half as Horton failed to make contact with a short pass, letting Hearsey run 30 yards unchallenged before beating Arnold.

On 57 minutes Sports made it 3-0. Hearsey set up Dean Williams with a superb 25-yard pass and he steered the ball past Arnold.

Wednesfield had to thank Arnold for keeping the score down with excellent saves from Williams, Hearsey and Oliver Butler.

Wednesfield skipper Ben Sanderson's penalty was saved by Pearson in the 88th minute.

■ Managerless Cradley Town cancelled their West Midland Premier game against Wolverhampton Casuals as they were unable to field a side.

Rugby: Walsall Juniors U9 South 6 Dudley Sports West U9 0; Wombourne Olympic U9 6 Dudley Sports East U9 0; Dudley Sports U13 1 (Peter Johnson) Tipton Town U13 3; Dudley Sports Juniors U16 1 (Aaron Turner) 2; Liam Green, Nathan Foley; Bromsgrove Colts U14 1; West Hagley South U14 0 Dudley Sports Dynamos U14 18 (Lewis Hale 4, Jordan Boffey 3, George Taylor 2, Luke Groves, Chad Doherty, Jack Bell, Tom Hulme, Tom Huddleston, Brad Welding, Junaid Tariq, Harry Vine, Luke Croftner).

Dudley Sports U11 Girls 14 (Ellie Ward 5, Hannah Fellows 4, Kirsty Hamper 2, Tilley Pearson, Katie Smith, Kelly Nicklin) Wyre Forest U11 Girls 0.

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GORNAL GOING FOR GLORY - AND CASH

GORNAL manager Ian Rowe is targeting more FA Vase glory – and a welcome cash boost for the club after his side achieved history by marching into the last 32.

Athletic secured a home tie against Wisbech on Saturday, January 19 with last Saturday's 1-0 win over Boston Town.

Prize money from the cup run has already topped £11,000 and another £1,800 is up for grabs if Gornal beat Wisbech.

by Tim Nash

Gornal have a hectic Midland Alliance programme before their next Vase adventure, which has left them four games from Wembley.

But Rowe believes they can achieve more knockout glory.

"It's a fantastic opportunity for us – a home tie against a team from our own level," said Rowe, who works as a warehouse manager at a steelworks.

"Hopefully there are a couple more ties in it for us – and we're only four games from Wembley."

Fantastic

"We want to take each game as it comes, but we want to keep progressing."

"It's fantastic for us as a club – it's further than we've ever been before, and we want to keep it going."

Rowe revealed that scouting on their Cambridgehire-based opponents was already under way.

"We're trying to find out as much as we can about Wisbech and we plan to go and watch them on New Year's Day," added Rowe.

The manager also revealed that keeping his squad happy is another trick as the excitement builds.

Two regulars – Scott Moore and Rian Francis-Mills – are cup-tied after playing for Bloxwich and

Rowe says the Vase run tops anything he has achieved in football management.

"Winning the West Midlands League was tough, but we've bettered that this season. And to win £11,000 in prize money is fantastic for a club like us."

Gornal are also hoping for a boost at the gate after fewer than 100 turned up in the last round.

"Usually we get more than that for a league game," said Rowe. "But with Wolves playing Birmingham in the late kick-off game, I think that affected it."

"It would be nice to think we could get a few more there, but we've got seven or eight league games before that so we'll see where we are nearer the time."

Stefan's long run pays off in big DK comeback



This is the moment when Dudley Kingswinford's Stefan Shillingford capped a late, lung-bursting 80m run to score a dramatic try against Luctonians. And it got even better for DK. Report and pictures – Page 39